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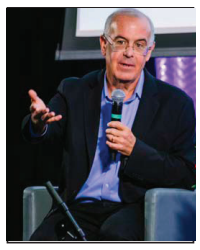

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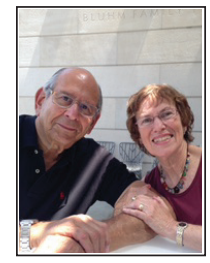

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WASHTENAW JEWISH NEWS

JANUARY 2025 Tevet/Shevet 5785 Volume XXV Number 4 FREE

JCC hosts Freedom Songs, a sing-along for MLK Day

Matasha W. Allen, long-time JCC employee and owner of Top Notch Productions, will present the Sixth Annual Freedom Songs Sing-Along on Monday, January 20. This event will take place at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, Ann Arbor, 48108, from 3–5 p.m. Since its inception in 2019, the Freedom Songs Sing-Along program is hosted annually in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The program will include beloved musical guests the Ypsilanti Youth Orchestra Jazz Ensemble (Steve Somers, Director) and the Ypsilanti Youth Choir (Crystal Harding, Director). The musical portion of the program will be from 3–3:45 p.m. There will be refreshments and "Freedom School" workshop activities from 4–5 p.m. This is a free event that is open to all. Registration is encouraged.

Photo from past years' Freedom Songs events

The power of singing together

Congregational singing was an essential part of the civil rights movement. Grassroots organizers would often hold "mass meetings" in churches, schools, or outdoors. Singing together sparked unity among the participants, despite their differences. The Freedom Songs often originated from spirituals and hymns. Singers adapted the lyrics of familiar songs to inspire and rally the masses. The environment of each sing-along event is designed to recreate the inspiration and the unity that one might experience attending a mass meeting. "Audience participation is essential!" Allen writes, "Prepare to see lots of hand clappin', foot-stompin', and maybe even a tambourine or two."

Using the arts to build bridges

While working at the JCC, Matasha (pronounced Mə-Tæ-shə) discovered that some of the songs sung by children in the Early Childhood Center were songs from her childhood, such as "This Little Light of Mine" and "Go Down, Moses." After attending her musical tribute to activist Fannie Lou Hamer in 2017, Peretz Hirshbein (ECC Director) invited her to sing for the school-age students attending a KidZone Vacation Day. When the JCC began offering Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a school closure alternative during the 2019–2020 school year, Hirshbein approached Allen again to discuss program options that would be a good fit for the JCC as an agency. Allen has organized the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Freedom Songs Sing-Along at the ECC since 2020. After the 2023 event, Hebrew Day School parent Esther Terry approached Allen about participating in a discussion group with HDS parents focusing on how to talk to their kids about racial justice. This led to a series of parent discussions over the next 18 months. HDS partnered with the 2024 event offering a Voting Rights Through Time workshop, attended by students from Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor. The event collaborators applied for a Community Grant from the Jewish Federation, supporting the Sing and Vote for Justice event in October, another community event with live music, dinner, and activities. In the post-program survey, one participant shared, "I felt this event was welcoming and encouraged community participation. Sharing a meal was a way to connect with others we didn't know."

Matasha's "Why?"

Feedback for the racial justice discussion group identifies as issues the idea that racism is no longer relevant and parent concerns that they aren't equipped to have difficult conversations with their children. For some families, especially families of color, racism is part of their reality. "We're living it," commented a group member. Allen notes that acknowledging racism's relevance is not intended to minimize the relevance of other systemic issues that affect our community, such as antisemitism. Dr. King wrote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

"My grandmother used to tell me, 'You're a human being!' Music has the power to make strangers find common ground in our humanity and the divine image I believe we possess." ■

Housing discrimination is still present in the deeds to our homes

By Michael Appel and Cathy Marshall

Did you know that thousands of homes in Washtenaw County have racist restrictive covenants attached to them, prohibiting the ownership or occupancy of these properties by African Americans? There are also covenants prohibiting Jews, and other non-Christians, from owning or living in certain properties. The language of the restrictions can be shocking. For example, one covenant states, that "the title shall not be conveyed to nor shall possession be had by persons of African or Jewish descent, nor aliens excepting such as are descendants from the English-speaking race." Another common covenant states, "No portion of this land shall be occupied by persons not wholly of the Caucasian race, except as servants and guests."

JOIN THE MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE:
UNCOVERING HIDDEN STORIES OF WASHTENAW COUNTY
FEBRUARY 21, 2024
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JUSTICE InDeed
DISCONNECT
SETTLER COLONIZATION
FORCED LABOR
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RELOCATION
EXCLUSION
RECONSTRUCTION
WHITE TERRORISM
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ZONING
RACIALLY RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS
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PLANNING · TAX FORECLOSURE · MORTGAGES
RACIALLY RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS NO LONGER ENFORCEABLE... BUT THEY'RE NOT A THING OF THE PAST
THIS IS A LEGACY OF SLAVERY
IN YOUR SPHERE OF POWER & PRIVILEGE
HOW CAN YOU INTERRUPT PATTERNS?
KNOCK-ON EFFECTS FOR GENERATIONS
STOPS US FROM ECONOMIC EQUALITY
POWER & PRIVILEGE
CALL TO ACTION:
TRANSCRIBE DEEDS INTO A MAP THAT WILL SHOW HOW PRACTICE HAS SHAPED THE PERSISTENCE OF SEGREGATION
REVEAL THE SYSTEM
KNOWN THE HISTORY TO KNOW WHAT YOU CAN DO
RECKONING · REMEMBERING · REIMAGINING
GRAPHIC RECORDING BY RIO HOLADAY

While no longer enforceable, these private restrictions were used to reinforce housing segregation, primarily from around 1920–1950. They shouldn't be thought of as simply historical artifacts, however. They are connected to ongoing inequities, and they provide an opportunity to explore ways to repair the harms they caused. Moreover, as a result of recent changes to state law, they can be repealed by current homeowners or neighborhoods who want to affirmatively reject discrimination and segregation.

"Despite Washtenaw County's liberal reputation, racially restrictive covenants are an example of our county's ugly history of housing discrimination," said Michael J. Steinberg, a U-M law professor and one of the founders of Justice InDeed. "We need the community's help to create a map to not only educate residents of this history, but to

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From the editor

Tsunamis?

I recently received a message from Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, the senior rabbi emerita of Beit Simchat Torah in New York in which she wrote, "I feel like we have lived through a massive earthquake and we are standing on the shore watching for the tsunami that is about to hit land." This extreme level of foreboding is common online, but in my everyday life, I feed the dogs (I rescued a puppy three days after the November election), eat, read, write, work, and sleep in relative calm. I remember to feel and express gratitude.

The tsunami metaphor was used in another context recently by my teacher Rabbi Juan Mejia. For my Judaism Unbound certificate program I took Rabbi Mejia's class, "Beyond the River Sambation: Old and New Jewish Communities in Asia, Africa and the New World." Rabbi Meija says that based on his experience and that of his rabbinic colleagues, there is a "tsunami" of people around the world who want to convert to Judaism. His anecdotal evidence is quite different from other people I hear from who teach Judaic studies in universities across the U. S: They say class registrations are way down over the past several semesters. These crosscurrents are dizzying.

So here I am, a little dizzy, committed to keeping a light shining.

My surveys of WJN readers tell me to focus on local news. So, in this and the last few issues, you will find a higher percentage of space given to people and events in our local community. I've stopped paying for a subscription to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency's syndicated news, though I might not have done this if it weren't for the fact that *The Forward* newspaper has a policy of allowing free access to reprinting any of their original written content. Let me put in a pitch here: The Forward is a non-profit and is a very worthy place for your donations! The only "non-local" piece in this issue of WJN is *Forward* editor Jodi Rudoren's piece on Rashid Khalidi's living room conversation with observant Jews on the Upper West Side of New York City (see page 19).

I am also excited to let you know that I have signed a contract with Wayne State University Press for my book *Hidden in Paradise: An American Story of Racism and Betrayal in a Jewish Family*. It should be out in the fall of 2025. I am grateful to the Washtenaw community for all the feedback I received on the 'Looking for Rose," installments (26 of them) I published in the WJN as I was writing the book. As soon as the book is ready for pre-publication orders, I will let you know. ■

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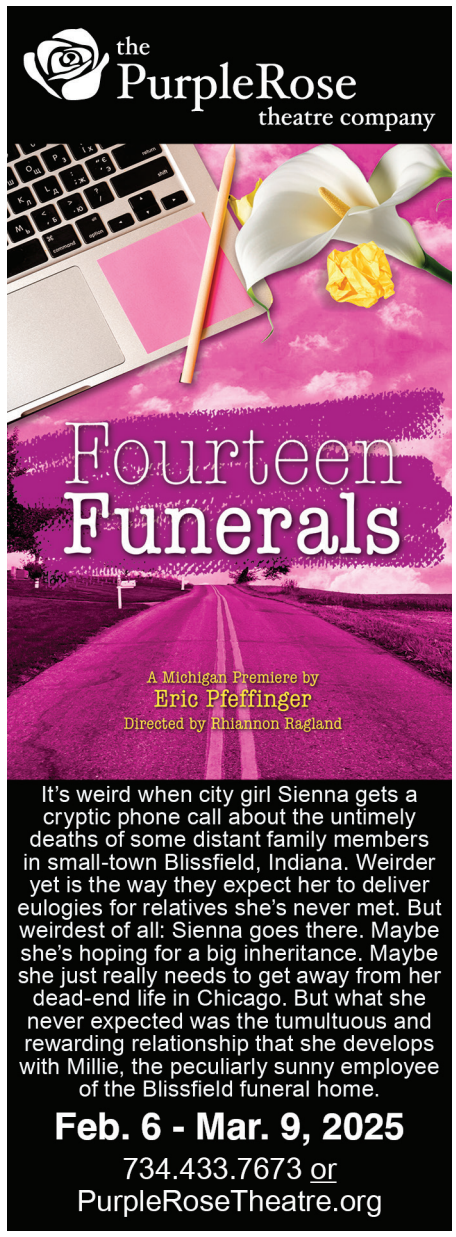
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Directed by Rhiannon Ragland
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Steve Somers
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After the Sing-Along, join us for a unique educational program!
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Visit jccannarbor.org to register!
Questions? Please contact Matasha Allen at matashaallen@jccannarbor.org

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Larry Hauptman and Devon Spier at the JCC's Amster Gallery

By Drew Coel, Marketing and Program Associate, Ann Arbor JCC

The Amster Gallery at the Ann Arbor JCC welcomes in another winter season with two special exhibits, with the reception taking place on Thursday, January 16, from 6–7:30 p.m. Schmooze, have a nosh, and join us for poetry readings and a song circle with Cantor Emma Maier of Temple Beth Emeth while exploring the work of these talented artists.

Featured in the Amster Gallery is a collection by talented photographer Larry Hauptman, titled *Life in and About the Land of Israel.* A local artist, Larry looks forward to showing more of his work at the JCC. His technical skills were shaped at Washtenaw Community College and further refined through various photography workshops. "For as long as I can remember, photographing people has been a passion of mine," Larry says. "As camera technology has evolved, it's become easier to capture authentic, candid moments."

Larry's work showcases images of everyday people in Israel, fully engaged in daily life. "Many of my subjects are unaware of the camera, while others notice and choose to interact, introducing a sense of spontaneity," he states. "Regardless of cultural or socioeconomic differences, people everywhere seem to share a common goal: creating meaningful lives for themselves and their families."

Also featured this winter in the JCC's Newman Lounge is the deeply impactful *18 Plus One: A Post-October 7th Jewish Life Exhibit* by Canadian artist and bestselling poet-author Devon Spier. In October 2024, Devon's work was displayed as part of *Artistic Reflections: Commemorating One Year Since October 7th,* a large group show that took place at the JCC. This time, she is proud to present more of her work in the entirety of the lounge space.

Based on the nature of the content, this exhibit is best suited for adult audiences.

This is Devon's first collection of text-based canvases, and she is eager to continue exhibiting this project in public spaces across North America to attract Jewish and non-Jewish audiences alike, making meaning together as they reenvision the Jewish future beyond present catastrophe.

Larry Hauptman

Devon Spier

"*18 Plus One* introduces 19 different worlds to the members of the Jewish community and the general public in order to re-commemorate the events of October 7, 2023, which constitute one of the deadliest mass murders of Jews since the Holocaust," Devon says. "Through irreverent questions and deep, soulful affirmations, this project enables the public to search their deepest selves and reevaluate their own personal histories in order to create a path of heart toward Jewish and global community safety, truth-telling, and belonging."

Both Larry and Devon's art are up now in the Amster Gallery and Newman Lounge, respectively, and will be available to view until February 6–7.

We hope to see you at the reception on January 16." ■

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Irene Butter Fund welcomes grant applications

By Joy Wolfe Ensor

The Steering Committee of the Irene Butter Fund for Holocaust and Human Rights Education is excited to announce the opening of the application period for new grant submissions.

The Irene Butter Fund was founded by Generations After, Temple Beth Emeth's group of adult children and descendants of Holocaust survivors. Its purpose is to support educational programming that keeps the lessons of the Holocaust alive, and to help address modern-day challenges of "othering" and disregard for human rights. The Fund's name honors the legacy of Irene Butter (www.irenebutter.com), humanitarian, internationally known Holocaust survivor,

Irene Butter Fund for Holocaust and Human Rights Education 2025 Inaugural Grant Opportunity
Irene Butter
Holocaust survivor, humanitarian, author, educator, recipient of Germany's Order of Merit, co-founder of the University of Michigan Raoul Wallenberg peace medal award and Zeitouna, a Jewish-Palestinian dialogue group.
Inviting Proposals
To create and support educational programming about the Holocaust and modern day challenge of "othering" that disregards human rights.
Educators, schools, organizations, faith communities and interested others in the Washtenaw community: Apply by March 1, 2025.
For further information, scan this QR code or visit https://tinyurl.com/ibfgrant
JEWISHANNARBOR.ORG/APPLY-IRENE-BUTTER-FUND-FOR-HOLOCAUST-AND-HUMAN-RIGHTS-

Image credit: Samantha

and author of the award-winning memoir *Shores Beyond Shores: From Holocaust to Hope, My True Story*. Her work on behalf of Holocaust and human rights education embodies her mantras of "Never a bystander," "Refusing to be enemies," and "All people are our kin." Irene's many accolades include Germany's Order of Merit (the equivalent of the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom) for her work on Holocaust education, the prize for #1 podcast in Germany (Best Conversation category) for her series of talks with German high school students, and the Genesis Humanitarian Award.

Since its establishment, the Fund has garnered generous support, including a major matching grant from philanthropist Patti Askwith Kenner, a Community Engagement Fund Grant from the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, and contributions from over 100 additional donors in Washtenaw County and across the globe. The Fund's inaugural Steering Committee is chaired by Cantor Regina Lambert-Hayut and includes members Rita Benn, Robin Axelrod, and Rachel Goldberg. Shoshana Mandel Warner is the marketing lead, boosting the fund's visibility in schools, faith communities, and other organizations in our county.

Steering Committee chair Regina Lambert-Hayut says, "We are thrilled to be able to offer these grant opportunities to educators in our area. Teaching the next generation about the dangers of bigotry and blanket hatred against groups of people is as important now as it has ever been." Rita Benn adds, "We are particularly excited about our collaboration with the Zekelman Holocaust Center. They will be supporting the promotion of the Irene Butter Fund to Michigan teachers and will also be partnering with us on an exciting initiative to distribute Irene's memoir to those classroom teachers who will be participating in their teaching training programs." And Irene Butter herself notes, "Students are particularly receptive to Holocaust education based on memoirs of survivors as they learn about individual experiences in addition to what is offered by history books."

How to apply

The Fund welcomes grant applications from individuals, organizations, schools, and faith communities in the greater Washtenaw County area. The Steering Committee seeks applications for a diverse array of educational programming related to its mission. Innovative, youth-focused projects that align with the Fund's mission will be prioritized.

Ideas for projects for support by this fund may include but are not limited to the following:

Development of an exhibit/program (essay, visual art, poetry, music, spoken word) for middle or high school students around the theme of the Holocaust and human rights.

Speaker series addressing the link between the Holocaust and contemporary antisemitism, racism, authoritarianism, and human rights abuses.

Developing interfaith youth ambassadors with knowledge of the Holocaust.

Community- or school-wide conflict resolution dialogues around contentious human rights issues, including antisemitism, islamophobia, Israel/Palestinian war, etc.

A residency by a scholar, poet, musician, etc. on the topic of Holocaust and human rights education.

Purchase of materials for dissemination and discussion to youth that augment the teaching of the Holocaust and human rights.

Organized field trips to the Zekelman Holocaust Center in Farmington, Michigan.

Although youth-driven projects that align with the Fund's mission will be prioritized for funding, eligible target groups for educational programming also include public school teachers and administrators, parent-teacher organizations, mental health professionals who work with youth, congregational faith leaders, religious school teachers, nonprofit community administrators, and providers who work with youth.

Grant funds of up to $7,000 are available to support multiple grants in the current application cycle. Individual grant applications are limited to $2,500 in funding.

The deadline for proposal submission is March 1, 2025. Decisions of funded proposals will be made and announced within a month of this deadline.

Applicants are encouraged to submit a letter of intent to apply by February 15, 2025. The letter of intent should be no longer than one page and can be formatted as an executive summary for the proposal.

To apply for grant funding, please visit https://www.jewishannarbor.org/apply-irene-butter-fund-for-holocaust-and-human-rights-education/ or scan the QR code on the graphic in this article.

Questions about the letter of intent or grant application submission can be addressed to Rita Benn at ritakbenn@gmail.com.

How to donate

The Irene Butter Fund continues to accept donations. The Steering Committee encourages donations of $94 and up to honor Irene's recent 94th birthday. To contribute, please visit https://www.jewishannarbor.org/apply-irene-butter-fund-for-holocaust-and-human-rights-education/ ■

Can one person make a difference?

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute at the University of Michigan is delighted to announce its inaugural event, a roundtable discussion to be held in Rackham Amphitheater at 5 p.m. on January 21, on the question of "Can one person make a difference, and if so, how?"

Taking place during the week of MLK Day, an intergenerational group of distinguished panelists will consider the historical impact of individuals like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Raoul Wallenberg, as well as the movements they joined, created, or motivated through their actions. Panelists will include local Holocaust survivor and educator Irene Butter; Matthew Countryman, Associate Professor of History and Associate Professor of Afroamerican and African Studies; Elliot Ratzman, research fellow of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute; and University of Michigan undergraduate student Sooyun Christina Kim.

The event will be the first in a series of roundtable discussions on contentious questions of religious, ethnic, national, and moral significance sponsored by the Institute. Announced in late 2023, the Raoul Wallenberg Institute opened its doors in the fall of 2024, under the leadership of Jeffrey Veidlinger. Veidlinger, who holds the Joseph Brodsky Collegiate Professorship of History and Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, has taught courses on the Holocaust, antisemitism, and Jewish history since his arrival at the university in 2013 and previously served as Director of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies. A specialist on Jewish history in Russia and Ukraine, his latest work, *In the Midst of Civilized Europe: The Pogroms of 1918–1921 and the Onset of the Holocaust,* won a Canadian Jewish Literary Award, a Vine Book Award, and was a finalist for the Lionel Gelber Prize, the National Jewish Book Award, and the Wingate Literary Prize. The leadership of the Institute also includes an executive committee composed of faculty experts from around the university.

Inspired by the example of Raoul Wallenberg, a 1935 University of Michigan graduate who went on to save tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust, the mission of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute is to study hatred directed against religious and ethnic communities, foster cross-cultural understanding, and elevate civic discourse. Through teaching, research, and public engagement, the institute seeks to develop strategies to combat antisemitism, divisiveness, and discrimination. "Together we can honor the legacy of Raoul Wallenberg by fostering the values he embodied — empathy, tolerance, courage, and leadership," explains Veidlinger.

Already in its first year of operation, the Institute has begun to make an impact. It has initiated three research projects: a study of religious holiday celebrations in public schools in the United States and their effects on religiously diverse children and families; a history of hatred in the Great Lakes Region; and a longitudinal study of the views of university students regarding religious and ethnic minorities, which is being conducted in partnership with the Institute for Social Research. Three research fellows are also in residence: Elliot Ratzman works on antiracism in the late twentieth century; Yuri Kaparulin researches genocide in Ukraine; and Aaron Rock-Singer studies Islamic movements and law in Mandate Palestine. The Institute has also initiated several courses, including a dialogue course on Israel and Palestine and a flagship course on religious and ethnic tolerance.

The remaining events will take place in the same location on February 4, February 18, and March 18 at 5 p.m. ■

A glimpse into the Gan

By Alexandra Bartscht, HDS Gan teacher

A bright, happy classroom filled with twinkling lights, cozy corners, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Here, children are smiling, playing, discovering, learning, and growing every day. You can hear a child whispering and flipping pages in the classroom library, while paintbrushes fly across the paper in the art center. Dice are rolled as children add numbers and explore math concepts through games. Experiments unfold as young scientists dive into hands-on lessons, discovering and learning about the world around them.

Welcome to the Gan at Hebrew Day School — home to a wonderful group of thriving kindergarten and young-five students. Each day in the Gan brings a new adventure. Our students engage in hands-on activities across a variety of subjects, fostering both creativity and critical thinking.

In Literacy, we focus on a phonics skill of the week, helping children learn letter sounds and how to blend them to read and write. We use the Science of Reading approach, which is a research-backed method that emphasizes systematic phonics instruction to build strong reading foundations. Along with this, we incorporate Heggerty, a program designed to improve phonemic awareness. Heggerty helps children hear and manipulate sounds in words, which is crucial for developing reading skills.

This is our second year using Mystery Science, and boy, do the students love it! This movement-based curriculum brings science to life through interactive lessons. The children explore topics like animal and plant needs, weather, how sunlight warms the Earth's surface, and an introduction to the concepts of push and pull and how they affect the motion of objects.

A favorite science unit in the Gan is our Spring Chick Hatching project. We collect fertilized eggs from a local farmer, incubate them in the classroom, and observe their growth from start to finish. As the chicks hatch, the children learn all about how to care for them, the life cycle of a chicken, and the importance of nurturing living things. The excitement in the room as the chicks emerge is unforgettable, and it's a wonderful way to connect hands-on learning with the natural world around us!

This year, we've also introduced the Math in Focus curriculum. It provides a hands-on approach to learning math, focusing on understanding concepts through visual models, interactive problem-solving, and real-world applications. This method encourages children to develop a deep understanding of math, building their skills in ways that are both engaging and practical.

The Gan is more than just our classroom; it's our happy place, a sanctuary. It's a space where everyone can come as they are and be themselves, with all their unique personalities. The Gan is a place where children learn to care for each other, not just as classmates, but as friends who look out for one another. We create an environment where curiosity, creativity, and kindness are nurtured every day. We welcome you anytime to visit and experience the joy of learning in the Gan! ■

ShinShinim report

By Danielle and Lahav, Ann Arbor ShinShinim

Danielle and Lahav came to Ann Arbor to create a deeper connection between the Ann Arbor Jewish community and Israel, through informal education and by bringing the Israeli atmosphere to Michigan — interactive lessons that include music, culture, Israeli childhood games, and even food. They arrived in Ann Arbor in August 2024 for a service year as Israeli emissaries between their high school graduation and military service through the ShinShinim program of the international Jewish Agency for Israel.

THE SHINSHINIM BOARD
The pioneers dream of a homeland for the Jewish people
מה החלום שלך/לך?
What's your dream?
My dream is to create a home for Jews in Eretz Israel
Israel BeKind

Welcoming Shabbat with USY

The past months have been full of meaningful experiences. In November, we joined a Friday night Shabbat gathering with the USY (United Synagogue Youth) youth group of Beth Israel Congregation. It was a pleasure to meet local teens, enjoy a wonderful Shabbat atmosphere together, and connect over shared traditions.

Teaching Israel's History at HDS

At the Hebrew Day School (HDS), we marked November 29 (the day in 1947 of the UN Partition Plan — the UN's vote on dividing Eretz Israel into two states) by leading a couple of classes. The first one was about Israel Belkind, one of the first pioneers to dream of and establish modern settlements anywhere in Israel. Then, together with the students, we discussed their dreams and how to achieve them. The second lesson was about the UN Partition Plan, exploring the complexities of dividing the map and the disagreements that followed the decision. Our key message was the importance of collaboration and sharing to achieve goals where everyone can succeed. We designed school bulletin boards on these topics and ended the day with a school-wide assembly featuring a performance about Israel's establishment, where they met new immigrants and pioneers — including David Ben Gurion himself — and witnessed a historic UN vote. Afterward, the children received different pieces of maps of Israel, and thanks to their collaboration, we were able to create unique and original maps of the country.

Diversity and Inclusion at HDS

In December, our focus at HDS shifted to diversity and inclusion in Israeli society. We began by discussing how Israel takes the issue of individuals with disabilities seriously, with a strong awareness of the importance of special education classes and inclusion. Through a series of activities, neurotypical students explored how people with disabilities might feel, and brainstormed ways they can be supportive and inclusive in society and in their friend groups. We continued with classes about other diverse populations in Israel and their contributions to its vibrant society.

TBE — Hanukkah and the Israeli Diversity

At Temple Beth Emeth (TBE), we facilitated lessons in both the weekday and Sunday schools about Hanukkah traditions and the complexities within Israeli society, mirroring some of our lessons at HDS.

Music classes at ECC

Danielle continued her regular music classes at the ECC (Early Childhood Center of the JCC), enriching the children's knowledge of Israeli songs through dance and singing. This month, she also taught them Hanukkah songs and sang a song with the kids during the weekly "Shabbat Singing" gathering of the ECC's children and their parents.

Israeli Storytime

In November, we hosted our first Jewish Storytime, which was a huge success! We followed up with another session in December, sharing Hanukkah stories and engaging the children with crafts and activities. This initiative, held at different branches of the Ann Arbor District Library, is for children aged 2–7. It will continue monthly, featuring new stories in Hebrew and English, along with related activities. We warmly invite you to join us on January 12 at the Malletts Creek library!

In our free time

In our free time, we've enjoyed many firsts: experiencing snow (the first of several now), celebrating Thanksgiving, and attending the *Newsies* musical at Pioneer High School with Sue Adler. Lahav and a ShinShinit based in Detroit also attended a performance by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. We went to another Michigan football game, and Danielle's father visited Ann Arbor, allowing us to share some of our experiences with him. During Winter Break, we spent time with our host families and ShinShinim from other cities across the country, making the most of this festive season.

Looking ahead to 2025

Looking ahead, we are excited to continue learning, growing, and sharing Israel's culture with the community, and we're so excited for what the next year holds. You can stay updated with our journey on Instagram (@shinshinim_annarbor), where we post regularly about our activities. You can also reach out to us via email at danielle@jewishannarbor.org and lahav@jewishannarbor.org. We'd love to hear from you and deepen the connection we're building together! ■

TBE events in January

Events and services are both in person and/or virtual. Please see www.templebethemeth.org for full details, location information, and links.

Tot Shabbat Service & Dinner
Fridays at 5:45 p.m.
Join the clergy to celebrate Shabbat with fun activities, stories, songs, and age-appropriate learning for children ages 0–5. Registration requested

Elementary Shabbat Service & Dinner (every second Friday of the month)
Fridays at 5:45 p.m.
A short service, song session, and community building! Most appropriate for children ages 5–10 and their parents, grandparents, and other adults. Everyone is welcome! Registration requested.

Wine & Cheese Shabbat Reception
Fridays at 6 p.m. (except the second Friday of each month)

Shabbat Service
Fridays at 6:30 p.m.
Every 2nd Friday at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday Shabbat service
Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Weekday morning blessings
Weekdays at 9:15 a.m.
Join Rabbi Whinston each weekday morning for a short service of song, poetry, and meditation.

Twenty-five-minute mindfulness with Jewish spiritual director Linda Greene
Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.
Zoom room opens at 8:15 a.m. for optional check-in. Blessing and intention setting 8:30–8:35 a.m. Meditate 8:35–9 a.m. Start your day centered and connected.

Queer Torah Study
Tuesdays at 7 p.m.
Join us in person or via Zoom for a discussion of queer themes in the weekly Torah portion! Led by Ari Marcotte & Ari Smith. Guest leaders welcome! Contact Ari M (ari.j.marcotte@gmail.com) for more information.

Back Door Food Pantry
Thursdays, 4–7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner
Thursdays at 5 p.m.
Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session.

Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Whinston
Fridays at 12 p.m.

Shabbat morning Torah study
Saturdays at 8:50 a.m.
Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion.

Weekly Mahj
Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.
Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m.

WTBE Gift Shop Open
Wednesdays at 4 p.m. and Friday at 5:30 p.m. | Second Friday of every month open at 6:30 p.m.
Washtenaw County's only Judaica Shop!

Jewish Book Club
Thursdays, January 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30, at 11 a.m.

Depolarizing Ourselves: The first steps toward civil engagement
Sunday, January 5, at 3 p.m.

Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle
Monday, January 6, at 6 p.m.

Aging Healthy and Strong Class
Thursdays, January 9, 16, 23, and 30, at 1 p.m.

Brotherhood Guys Night Out
Thursday, January 9, at 6 p.m.

Introduction to Judaism with Rabbi Whinston
Thursday, January 9, 16, and 23, at 7 p.m.

Family Camp
Friday, January 10, at 6:45 p.m.
Family Camp provides an opportunity for families to play and learn together, for students to reinforce and share some of what they are learning in the classroom, and most importantly, to strengthen ties among students and parents/caretakers.

Jewish Monsters and Magic Class
Sundays, January 12 and 26, at 4:30 p.m.

Death and Legacy in the Tanach
Mondays, January 13 and 27, at noon and 7:30 p.m.

WTBE Historical Novel Reading Group
Monday, January 13, at 12:30 p.m.

WTBE Fiber Arts
Monday, January 13, at 7:30 p.m.

LGBTQ Shabbat Potluck
Friday, January 17, at 5:30 p.m.
Join us for a Shabbat dinner and candle lighting with members of the local queer community! Bring a dish to share with others, make new friends, and let us know what you'd like to see in future queer programming!

Bereavement Group
Tuesday, January 21, at 4 p.m.
The group will have opportunities to share openly about their process of grieving and will also have topic-based readings to spark discussion.

Justice InDeed Training
Tuesday, January 21, at 7 p.m.

Continuation of Justice indeed from page 1

enable us to take steps to repair the harm done by a practice that deprived generations of people of color of wealth and opportunity."

Do you live in a home with a restrictive covenant? Justice InDeed is a community collaborative project that seeks to better understand and repair the harms done by racially restrictive covenants in Washtenaw County. The organization's current initiative is to build a database and interactive, Zillow-like map helping us better reckon with our history of housing discrimination. When the map is completed, anyone will be able to click on any home in the county to learn if it has a racist covenant, and if so, what it says and how it can be repealed. Justice InDeed has transcribed a little over one-third of the roughly 10,000 documents that need to be reviewed and aims to complete the transcription project by May — all done by motivated volunteers.

On Tuesday, January 21, at 7 p.m., at the Temple Beth Emeth Social Hall (2309 Packard, Ann Arbor), the Social Action Committees of Temple Beth Emeth and Beth Israel Congregation are joining with Justice InDeed for a collaborative, hands-on session. The meeting will include an overview of the history of restrictive covenants and a description of Justice InDeed's work, followed by a training where we will learn to transcribe the restrictive covenants using our personal computers. We can continue to transcribe both at the session and later at home, participating in Justice InDeed's work to complete the database and map.

No experience is necessary and everyone is invited. Anyone in high school or older can effectively participate. Just bring your enthusiasm and willingness to help make a difference in our community! Please bring a laptop or tablet if you can. See you there!

Registration is required and can be done from the Temple Beth Emeth calendar or directly at https://www.templebethemeth.org/event/justice-indeed-training.html. For more information, contact Cathy Marshall at happycath@comcast.net.! ■

Revival of the pickle

Eastern Michigan University's Center for Jewish studies is excited to announce that Professor Rachel B. Gross will deliver a talk titled "A Pickle Problem: The Deli Revival and American Jewish Religion." In this talk, Gross will draw from her recent book, *Beyond the Synagogue: Jewish Nostalgia as Religious Practice*, which was a finalist for the 2021 National Jewish Book Award in American Jewish Studies. Her book also received an honorable mention for the American Jewish Historical Society's 2021 Saul Viener Book Prize.

Rachel Gross

Gross's talk will explore the nostalgic revival of interest in the Jewish deli menu in recent years, noting how chefs and restaurateurs have deliberately made American Jewish food fit for the 21st century by emphasizing sustainability, local produce, and a longing for Eastern European family and communal histories. Gross argues that participation in this culinary phenomenon serves as an alternative, underappreciated way of practicing American Jewish religion. In other words, by selling and consuming this revitalized deli cuisine, American Jews are not only expressing their longing for authentic Jewish pasts, but they are also building community in the present and passing on their values to future generations. Gross uses the Ashkenazi culinary revival as a way to identify challenges in embracing the diversity within American Judaism.

This talk will take place on Monday, January 20, at 7 p.m. in the EMU Student Center (room 300). This event is free and open to the public. Please send inquiries to jewish.studies@emich.edu. ■

A2 Reconstructionists visit Alpena's Temple Beth-El

By Deborah Fisch, with Rabbi Gabrielle Pescador

Jewish wisdom holds that every community needs at least two synagogues: the one you belong to … and the one you wouldn't be caught dead in. But what to do when your temple is the only one serving nine counties?

Alpena is a town of around 10,000 people located about 100 miles southeast of Mackinac Bridge, with gorgeous Lake Huron beaches. Alpena's Temple Beth-El provides "ReConservAdox" worship services twice a month led by visiting rabbis and lay leaders. Located in a beautifully restored 19th century building, the congregation welcomes all guests, Jewish or not. When I visited the area last summer, I was fortunate enough to be given a detailed tour by congregation president Ken Diamond.

Housed in a small, elegant white clapboard building converted from a church in 1891, Temple Beth-El draws members from all of Michigan's northeast Lower Peninsula. The building's interior features wooden pews, bimah, and trim — appropriate in an area where lumber was king. An intricately carved pump organ still functions, according to Diamond, although it has not been played recently. Many other historic objects are displayed in wooden cabinets.

The most stunning feature is the large stained-glass window that depicts Moses carrying the tablets. Temple Beth-El's website (templebethelalpena.org) contains information on the history of both the building and the congregation; I particularly recommend the charming short video linked from the "Our History" page.

Like many other Michigan congregations, particularly in areas with aging populations, Temple Beth-El's membership is much reduced from its heyday in the last century.

An affiliation with the Northern L'Dor V'Dor Consortium helps to compensate, as does the congregation's participation in community outreach programs, including those of a local interfaith organization.

The temple was not holding services the week I visited — a shame, especially if the warm welcome I received from Ken was representative of the congregation! I hope in years to come that I can plan my visits to coincide with services, which conclude with potlucks in the basement oneg (social gathering) room.

Ken asked to be put in touch with Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation's (AARC's) Rabbi Gabrielle Pescador to invite her to lead a service as a visiting rabbi. As a longtime AARC member and recent board member, I am always pleased when we can form connections with other congregations. Rav Gavrielle ultimately led a Shabbat service for the Alpena community on November 16. She writes:

"It was a delightful experience for me to reach out to the folks in Alpena and hear their stories, and I was totally enamored of the beauty and charm of the sanctuary.

"The community was super friendly, open, and easy to talk to. Some members have family ties to the Alpena Jewish community, while others moved for work opportunities and retirement. About 14 people showed up for services, which is a big deal, since most of the time they don't even get a minyan. The service was advertised in the local newspaper, mentioning that I would play the harp. News of this attracted a music-loving member of the Catholic community to join in.

"Right after services ended with the singing of Adon Olam, several members approached the bimah to invite me back in 2025. I happily agreed and plan to return to Alpena when the weather warms up — I hope the summer might draw the AARC community northward for a Shabbat weekend."

To learn more about Alpena's Temple Beth El and its Jewish community, visitors should communicate via the contact information on templebethelalpena.org to learn when services will be held.

AARC events for January

January 1
Rosh Chodesh Tevet Minyan with Rav Gavrielle. On Zoom. 10 a.m.

January 11
Second Saturday Morning Shabbat Service. This is a hybrid Shabbat Service led by our Rabbi, Gavrielle Pescador, at the JCC and on Zoom. Zoom link will be sent out the week before the event. 10:30 a.m.–noon.

January 15
Pop-In Tevet Teaching on Zoom. This is an hour led by our Rabbi. 7–8 p.m.

January 20
Davening Team Song Circle.

January 24
Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat. This is a hybrid service led by Rabbi Gavrielle Pescador in person at the JCC and on Zoom. Everyone is welcome! 6:30 p.m.

January 26
AARC Book Club. Rav Gavrielle will lead a discussion of *Loving Our Bones: Disability Wisdom and the Spiritual Subversiveness of Knowing Ourselves Whole* by Rabbi Julia Watts Belzer. Lunch at 12:15 p.m. followed by a book discussion 1–2 p.m.
For more information, email Greg Saltzman gsaltzman@albion.edu.
For more information about services or events or to receive Zoom links, please email: emily@aarecon.org or visit Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation website: aarecon.org.

January Calendar

Always check websites or call for updates before planning to attend anything listed here.

Wednesday 1 Hanukah 8th candle tonight Rosh Hodesh Tevet
Yidish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. About 45 minutes each of conversation and reading. Free and open to all those interested in Yiddish language, literature, and culture, no matter what level of proficiency. For more information, to get the link, and to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please email Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu at least one day before scheduled meeting day every Wednesday (except major Jewish holidays). 2 p.m.

Thursday 2 Last day of Hanukah
Rosh Chodesh Circle. Pardes Hannah. Online. 7 p.m.

Friday 3 Candle Lighting 4:57 p.m.

Saturday 4 Vayagash
Havdallah 6:03 p.m.
Shabbat Morning Services. Pardes Hannah. In-person and online. 10 a.m.

Wednesday 8
Yidish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. 2 p.m.

Friday 10
Candle Lighting 5:05 p.m.
Welcome Shabbat with Jewish Cultural Society. At the JCC. Dinner from a local restaurant follows a short observance that includes secular readings, songs, candle lighting, wine, and challah. Children are welcome. Dinner is free for JCS members. The cost of dinner for non-members is $10/person or $25/family. Registration required: www.jewishculturalsociety.org. 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 11 Vayechi
Havdallah 6:10 p.m.

Sunday 12
Jewish Storytime at AADL. Mallets Creek. Various times for different age groups.
Jewish-Arab relations in Israel. In-person/virtual hybrid brunch and lecture with Dr. Arik Cheshin about Jews and Arabs at the University of Haifa. Fed. At the JCC. 10 a.m.
Learn about greater Ann Arbor's Community Trip to Israel in December 2025. At TBE. 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday 15
Yidish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. 2 p.m.

Thursday 16
Larry Hauptman and Devon Spier at the JCC's Amster Gallery. 6 p.m.

Friday 17
Candle Lighting 5:13 p.m.

Saturday 18 Shemot
Havdallah 6:17 p.m.
Study Session. Pardes Hannah. In-person and online. 3 p.m.
Sunday 19

Monday 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day
6th Annual Freedom Songs Sing-Along: JCC. 3 p.m.
"A Pickle Problem: The Deli Revival and American Jewish Religion," Rachel B. Gross: EMU. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 21
Can one person make a difference? Wallenberg Institute inaugural roundtable. At Rackham Amphitheater 5 p.m
Justice InDeed for a collaborative, hands-on session: TBE and BIC, at TBE. 7.p.m

Wednesday 22
Yidish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. 2 p.m.

Thursday 23

Friday 24
Candle Lighting 5:21 p.m.

Saturday 25
Havdallah 6:25 p.m. Va'eira

Sunday 26
Braver Angels: Depolarizing Ourselves Workshop: BIC. 2 p.m.

Thursday 30 Rosh Hodesh Shevat
Bridging Legal Worlds: Jewish Women as Litigants before a German Imperial Supreme Court. Guest Speaker: Tamar Menashe: Frankel Center. 1 p.m.

Friday 31
Candle Lighting 5:30 p.m.

Phone numbers, websites, and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM): 1429 Hill Street, 248-408-3269, annarborminyan.org

Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-445-1910, aarecon.org

Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000 Washtenaw Ave, 734-665-9897, bethisrael-aa.org

Chabad House: 715 Hill Street, 734-995-3276, jewmich.com

Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies (EMU): www.emich.edu/jewish-studies/

Frankel Center: 202 S. Thayer St., lsa.umich.edu/judaic/

Jewish Community Center (JCC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 745-971-0990, jccannarbor.org

Jewish Cultural Society (JCS): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-975-9872, jewishculturalsociety.org

Jewish Family Services (JFS): 2245 South State Street, 734-769-0209, jfsannarbor.org

Jewish Federation: 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-677-0100, jewishannarbor.org

Pardes Hannah: 2010 Washtenaw Ave, 734-761-5324, pardeshannah.org

Temple Beth Emeth (TBE): 2309 Packard Road, 734-665-4744, templebethemeth.org

UM Hillel: 1429 Hill Street 734-769-0500, michiganhillel.org

A PICKLE PROBLEM: THE DELI REVIVAL AND AMERICAN JEWISH RELIGION

7:00 pm, Monday, January 20th, 2025

Professor Rachel B. Gross

EMU Student Center 900 Oakwood St.
Ypsilanti, MI 48197, Room 300

the J Seminars for Adult Jewish Enrichment

EVENTS & SPEAKER SERIES

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Youth Futures: Lifesaving social impact in Israel

By Staff of Youth Futures, a program of the Jewish Agency for Israel

In one of Israel's leading positive-intervention initiatives, The Jewish Agency's Youth Futures program partners teen mentors with at-risk children for a long-term period of cooperative learning and growth. Through the Jewish Federation's Annual Community Campaign, the greater Ann Arbor community helps to make possible the lifesaving work of Youth Futures.

Youth Futures participants

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor supports Youth Futures in the city of Nof Hagalil in the central Galilee. The funds from the local Federation for the 2023–24 program year allowed Youth Futures to empower and transform the lives of vulnerable children and their families, guiding them to new personal achievements and providing them support during an incredibly challenging period in Israel's history.

During the 2023–24 academic year, Youth Futures operated in seven schools in Nof Hagalil: five elementary schools and two middle schools. Their team consisted of seven mentors, a community and family coordinator, and a director. The program served 112 children this past year, which represents, with their parents, a total of 336 direct beneficiaries. Among the Youth Futures Nof Hagalil families in 2023–24, 38% receive governmental social services, 40% are single-parent households, and 14% of fathers and 20% of mothers are unemployed.

The Swords of Iron War that began in October 2023 has greatly affected Youth Futures families throughout Israel. As a result of the war, academic gaps due to school closures have widened, financial challenges have increased as parents lost jobs, and vulnerable families prone to high-risk behaviors have been under heightened stress. During the first few months of the war, Israel generally and Youth Futures specifically witnessed an alarming increase in PTSD, domestic violence, and emotional distress.

In response to the crisis, Youth Futures immediately adopted a comprehensive emergency strategy involving weekly in-depth assessments to identify urgent needs. The November 2023 Youth Futures national assessment revealed that, of the 980 children served across the country, 35% of families were displaced; 53% faced financial distress; and 56% of participants needed therapy. In response, Youth Futures embarked on a comprehensive set of measures, such as "Traveling Mentors" (face-to-face meetings between Mentors and evacuated children in their temporary communities), and opening 15 new Learning Centers nationwide to address the exacerbated challenges faced by Youth Futures children during the war. There are plans to continue to grow the number of Learning Centers across Israel, including a new center in the works for Nof Hagalil.

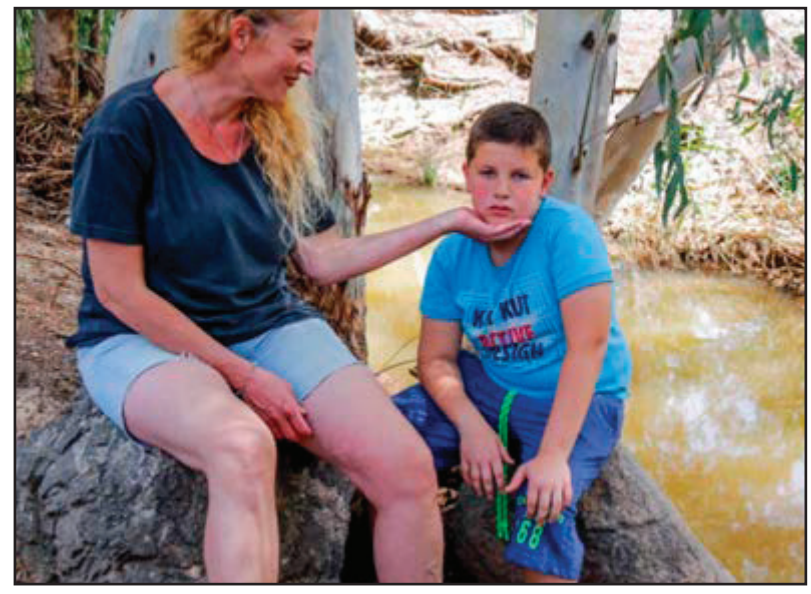
"Ruthie's" story: A bittersweet success story

Please note, due to the sensitive nature of "Ruthie's" story, we are unable to share her real name or photo at this time.

Ruthie's success story is bittersweet. She joined Youth Futures in eighth grade, with her school reporting that she was not forming friendships with her classmates despite being extroverted and having a seemingly positive attitude toward others. Ruthie's mother, too, reported that Ruthie was very sociable and that she had a close family bond with her siblings. However, at their first one-on-one meeting, Ruthie's Mentor noticed that she was shy and notably would not talk openly about her life. In a stark example, when asked what her dreams were, Ruthie said she has never had a dream, other than to get married so she could move out of her house — but she would not elaborate. During home visits, the Mentor noticed that although six people live in the house, no one other than Ruthie and Ruthie's mother were ever around. It took six months for Ruthie to tell her Mentor that one of her brothers was in prison for a murder he had committed with a younger brother. Additionally, Ruthie's mother forbade her from seeing friends in nearby Nazareth, and Ruthie was regularly lying about her whereabouts so she could see them.

The Mentor increased the number of meetings with Ruthie's school counselor and principal, in order to brainstorm about how to help the girl. Meanwhile, in addition to their regular meetings, the Mentor sought additional state-funded mental health and other social services, and arranged for Ruthie to get homework help after school. Eventually, Ruthie reached the point where she could help another girl study for a math test, which raised her confidence. Toward the end of the school year, Ruthie shared with her Mentor that an argument with her mother had led to her being badly beaten. The Mentor shared this information with the school counselor, who continued to pursue state-funded support but distanced the school from any formal responsibility for Ruthie's well-being.

Later, Ruthie arrived at school beaten and bruised; her father and brothers had beaten her together. This time, in addition to turning to the government's social services, the Mentor, counselor and principal brought a social worker into the school. Over a meal, the social worker urged Ruthie not to return home until she fully explained what had happened. Among other details, Ruthie said that as a punishment for her behavior, she had not been given any food for three days.



Youth Futures participants

The next day, a police investigator and a lawyer specializing in juveniles came to the school. At first, Ruthie refused to tell her story over again, but with encouragement from her Mentor, she eventually opened up and gave the officer and lawyer the details they needed. That evening, police officers came to her house to rescue her; she was taken to a center for girls under state care in southern Israel.

After some time, Ruthie 's Mentor was able to find out how to send her letters, and Ruthie responded. She reported that she was being treated well, that they were giving her a lot of therapy so she could process the trauma of her family situation, and that she nevertheless hoped to be able to return home. Simultaneously, the government's social services department worked with Ruthie's parents to develop the skills they needed for Ruthie to be allowed to return home.

After six months, Ruthie began returning home for visits, and eventually — Youth Futures staff have heard — she returned to Nof Hagalil and is now enrolled in the local high school. Ruthie's family has forbidden her from staying in contact with her old Youth Futures Mentor, since they feel that the Mentor betrayed their trust. However, from the perspective of Youth Futures, the Mentor performed holy work with Ruthie, saving her both physically and emotionally. To the program's organizers, the fact that the girl was removed from her dangerous home; the collaboration between the Mentor, the school, and government services; and the fact that the family has been rehabilitated to the point that Ruthie was allowed to return, constitute a great success.

To learn more about Youth Futures or any of the other deeply impactful organizations in Israel that are supported by greater Ann Arbor's Annual Community Campaign, contact Israel and Overseas Program Manager Amichay Findling (amichay@jewishannarbor.org) or visit JewishAnnArbor.org/About-Us/Community-Impact. ■

Jewish Federation
of Greater Ann Arbor

1 in 4 American Jews

say they have been the target of an antisemitic incident.*

Have you experienced anti-Jewish hate?

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Our Jewish Community Security and Community Relations Teams work tirelessly to address every reported incident of antisemitism. We work to navigate the situation with schools, workplaces, businesses, and when needed, local and national law enforcement.

REPORT AN INCIDENT

JewishAnnArbor.org/IncidentReporting

- Graffiti
- Antisemitic remarks or slogans
- Displays of Nazi or terrorist symbols
- Physical attacks/bullying
- Antisemitic posts online
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  - Use of Jewish stereotypes
  - Biased curricular materials
  - Disregard for Jewish holidays
  - Verbal abuse

Any incident in which you, your child, or anyone else has been made to feel excluded, uncomfortable, or unsafe due to your religion or perceived attitudes about Israel

For more resources about antisemitism and how to take action, visit **JewishAnnArbor.org.**

* According to the American Jewish Committee's report, The State of Antisemitism in America 2023.

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New permanent home for Washtenaw African American History Museum

By Leslie McGraw

On Sunday, November 17, over 160 community residents came out for the grand opening of the African American Cultural and Historical Museum of Washtenaw County (AACHM). There were four, RSVP-only openings, all held at its new "forever home," located at The Byrd Center, 3261 Lohr Road in Ann Arbor.

The late community giant, Letitia Byrd, dreamed of creating a Black history museum in the 1825 house that her husband, David, renovated in the 1970s and 80s. She wanted the museum to be created to honor her late husband, a restoration expert who used the home as his office. She continued her husband's restoration work after his death in 1987. Still, in 2020, there was a lot of work to be done. With the generosity of the Byrd's son, Kip Lightfoot, the museum was able to purchase the building at a third of the market value. This, combined with generous donations from the Song Foundation and other funders, allowed them to purchase and renovate, debt-free.

Everyone in attendance was wowed. Several guests who had previously visited The Byrd Center before the new restoration were shocked when they walked in. Many commented on the final product and the speed of restoration. Although the first full exhibit space will not be installed until later this month (January), it already feels like a museum. Aside from the lobby and bathrooms, much of the home feels authentically 19th century. The chimney area used to be a kitchen with a wood-burning stove. The upstairs area is sloped with a small door reminiscent of a time when people were shorter. "My husband and I have been to museums in every state and they hit the money with this one," marveled LaSonia Forte', "the other place [on Pontiac Trail] felt more modern and not as "museum-y."

The diverse crowd expressed awe in the way the community has come together to make the next phase happen. An example of this was, after the museum learned they had to have 50 parking spots, neighboring church Episcopal Church of the Incarnation created a parking lot easement to meet the requirement which does not expire as long as the museum is there.

With fresh energy and support, the museum has hired a Museum Administrator.

"I was really wowed by the way things fell into place," said Mr. Lamont Manley after listening to the presentation.

The idea to create a museum was planted in 1993 by Dr. Margaret Burrows, the co-founder of the DuSable Museum in Chicago. "She was a guest speaker at the AKA's Founders' Day in the Delta Psi Omega chapter, which is the one that's in the Ann Arbor Ypsilanti area. She challenged the people there in the audience to begin to document and preserve history of African Americans in the Ann Arbor community and Ypsilanti, and the surrounding areas," said Rev. Dr. Deborah Covington, the Board Chair for AACHM.

From that charge in 1993, 23 founding members coalesced to form a museum. For more than 28 years, AACHM was a quiet, but powerful resource to this community via collaborations, pop-up exhibits, displays, events, and programming. The museum's mission is to "research, collect, preserve and exhibit cultural and historical materials about the life and work of African Americans in Washtenaw County." Early on, AACHM was a leader in researching anti-slavery activism and African American community life. Through its partnership with the University of Michigan Arts of Citizenship Program over 20 years ago, they started AACHM's Journey to Freedom: An Underground Railroad Guided Bus Tour of Washtenaw County. In addition to the Underground Railroad Tours, AACHM is responsible for the Focus on the Arts Series, pop-up displays for local events, and the Oral Histories Project with the Ann Arbor District. During the pandemic, the museum enhanced its website to include virtual tours, created signage for the city-wide Juneteenth walk in Ann Arbor, and established an interactive, community-wide annual Kwanzaa.

Dr. Covington has long-held the belief that the museum is a necessary component to the health of Washtenaw County. "In 1970, 45 percent of residents in today's Water Hill and Kerrytown districts were black. Today, it is in the single digits. With the transient African American community, there are many young people who do not have an accurate or complete understanding of the impact of Black life on Washtenaw County. That alone is one of the reasons why the museum is potentially more important and urgent than it was in 1993 when the museum was first conceived."

In October, 2021, a new achievement was unlocked when a physical location was opened on Pontiac Trail on the North side of Ann Arbor. This momentous occasion was the culmination of the tireless efforts of dozens of dedicated volunteers over the years. This moment was shared by many of the remaining original founders, community leaders, and students from AAPS and YCS. Seeing displays, art, and historical artifacts representing hundreds of years of African American life in Washtenaw County was the first time many in Washtenaw County were able to wrap their head around its importance.

However, once the museum had everything in one space, it became apparent that the museum would quickly outgrow the Pontiac Trail space. On November 17, four years later, founding AACHM member, Joyce Hunter, addressed the audience in what used to be a 19th century living room. "An idea without action is a dream…" she began. Dr. Burroughs had a dream that inspired a tiny army of dedicated volunteers. Today, the dreams and actions of a few have blossomed into a community-wide accomplishment that we can build on for generations to come.

Reverend Ricky Jefferson viewing a poster at the AACHM grand opening on November 17, 2024

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF EXCEPTIONAL MUSIC

Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County is thrilled to present an **evening of exceptional music with celebrated pianist Martin Katz and gifted opera singer Ben Isyk** in a benefit concert for our community. By attending and sponsoring this event, you join us in uplifting critical programs and services that empower individuals, support families, and strengthen our community's most vulnerable members.

SONGS FOR SUPPORT

Saturday, January 11, 2025
Morris Lawrence Building,
Washtenaw Community College

Registration opens 6:15 pm
Program Recital begins 7:00 pm

Followed by Dessert Reception

Tickets: $75 pp/ $20 students
(must show ID at the door)

Register Today!

Sponsorships available
jfsannarbor.org

JFS Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County

We're proud to support JCOR, our partner with resettlement services to the community.

SAVE THE DATE for JAZZ for JCOR!
The Cliff Monear Trio
Sunday, March 16, 4pm at the JCC

Featuring the best of Jewish (composer and lyricist) contributions to America's only truly original art form. Net proceeds advance the work of the all-volunteer Jewish Congregations Organized for Resettlement.

JCOR
Jewish Congregations Organized for Resettlement
Partnering with JFS of Washtenaw County

Federation's Main Event draws 450 people, raises $230,000

More than 450 members of the greater Ann Arbor Jewish community came together in person and on Zoom in mid-November of last year for the Jewish Federation's Main Event, its most far-reaching fundraising and community-building event of the year. This was the largest showing at a Main Event in over a decade.

During the event, Federation presented the third annual Pillar Award to Nancy Margolis, who is, among many other achievements, the former Executive Director of both the JCC and Jewish Federation and an exemplar of Federation's pillars of Philanthropy, Engagement, and Convening.

The Main Event raised over $230,000 for the Federation's 2025 Annual Community Campaign, which funds organizations and activities that enrich Jewish life locally and around the world. You can learn more about making a difference through Federation by visiting JewishAnnArbor.org or calling (734) 677-0100.. ■

David Brooks doing a Q & A following his keynote presentation, moderated by Josh Pasek.

Main Event attendees found David Brooks refreshingly funny.

(L-R) Barb Stark-Nemon, Barry Nemon, Brad and Alyssa Seel

(L-R) Shira Klein, Steve Klein, Seth Penchansky, Hope Meadows

(L-R) Marian Cohen, Nancy Margolis, Roberta Tankanow, Sue Adler

(L-R) Main Event Co-Chairs Kevin and Alisa Cox, David Brooks, 2025 Annual Community Campaign Co-Chairs Sierra Imwalle and Larry Adler, Main Event Co-Chairs Josh and Laura Pasek

(L-R) Laurie and Jeff Barnett, Marty Shichtman

2025! Can you believe it?

By Lonnie Sussman

I'm ready to start 2025 and I hope everyone is. Some days the news hits us in the gut and some days the sun seems to shine brightly, and we see beauty all around us. Family and friends keep us grounded and joyful, and sharing a cup of tea or coffee or a meal with others reminds us of all our blessings. Happy secular new year to all and enjoy some of the recipes.

Cranberry-Glazed Roasted Butternut Squash, Brussels Sprouts, and Sweet Potato Salad with Cranberries and Goat Cheese

Serves 4–6 but easy to double

I don't know the origin of this recipe, but I got it from my friend, Nancy, whose daughter found it. What a great way to discover new dishes, from friends or friends of friends.

Roasted Vegetables
1 small butternut squash, peeled and cubed
1 pound brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved if large
2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
3 tbs olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tsp dried thyme

Roast the vegetables in a 400-degree oven after tossing all of them with the olive oil and seasonings. Roast for about 25 to 30 minutes, stirring halfway, until they are tender and caramelized.

Cranberry Glaze
½ cup cranberry juice
¼ cup dried cranberries
2 tbs honey or maple syrup
1 tbs balsamic vinegar

Combine the ingredients in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook for about 8–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the mixture thickens into a glaze

Finishing Touches
4 oz goat cheese
½ cup dried cranberries for garnish
1 tbs fresh chopped parsley

To serve, place the roasted vegetables in a large serving bowl. Drizzle the cranberry glaze over them and gently toss to coat. Sprinkle the goat cheese and dried cranberries over the top and garnish with the parsley, if desired. Serve warm.

Khoresh Karafs, Chicken Stew with Celery and Tomatoes

Website *Saffron&Herbs* by Mersedeh Prewer

Serves 4–6

A friend told me about a celery stew that was vegetarian and Middle Eastern. There are lots of versions of the recipe, but this one is made with chicken. Other recipes use lamb or beef. I'm making it with the vegetables and seasoning and without meat or chicken.

3 tbs vegetable oil
8 skinless chicken thighs with the bone
1 medium onion finely diced
3 cloves garlic, crushed or minced
1 red chili, minced and optional
1 medium leek, sliced
1 tsp turmeric
3 tbs tomato puree
2–4 cups water (the recipe calls for 650 ml. I don't do story problems so maybe add 2 cups and see how much more you need)
1 bay leaf
Juice of 1 lemon
⅛ tsp saffron. Place in 2 tsp water to "bloom" which means "do its thing."
1 head celery chopped into 2-inch chunks
5 small to medium tomatoes, halved
Salt and pepper to taste
Chopped parsley to garnish

Use a pan or casserole or Dutch oven to make this dish. First add 1 tbs of oil on medium heat and sear the chicken thighs on both sides. If you don't have room for all the chicken at once, do this in two batches. Remove from the pan and reserve until ready. Add 2 tbs oil to the pan and add the onions until they are golden. Then add the garlic and chili and stir. Add the leek to soften and stir to combine. Next, add in the turmeric and stir, and then the tomato puree and combine. Then add the water, bay leaf, lemon juice, saffron water, and stir. Add the chopped celery and submerge them in the water and then arrange the chicken thighs so they are just under the water. Place the tomato halves evenly in the stew. Bring the stew to a boil and then lower the heat to simmer with a lid on the pan for about an hour. You are looking for the chicken to fall off the bone. If the stew is too watery, continue to simmer without the lid to thicken up the sauce. Season to taste with salt and pepper and sprinkle the chopped parsley on top to serve.

Arctic Char with Wasabi-Mirin Sauce over Rice Noodles

The New Kosher by Kim Kushner

Serves 6

I found this cookbook on a sale rack. It's lovely, thoughtful, and full of recipes I haven't seen in other cookbooks. I like this fish recipe because my family likes arctic char. If you haven't tried this type of fish, it's a little like salmon, with a very nice mild flavor.

2–3 fillets of arctic char, about 3 pounds
1 package of dried rice vermicelli, cook according to the package, drain, and set aside
¼ cup mirin
¼ cup rice vinegar
2 tbs soy sauce
1–3 tbs wasabi paste (comes in squeeze tubes and use according to your level of heat)
Fresh basil

Broil the char on a baking sheet in the middle of the oven for about 9 minutes. The fish should look light pink and dry and even a little charred. Let cool for 5 minutes. Whisk together the mirin, vinegar, soy sauce, and wasabi paste until blended. Place the noodles on a large platter and top with the fish. Drizzle the sauce evenly over the fish and noodles and scatter the basil leaves on top.

Miso-Tahini Glazed Cod

The New Kosher by Kim Kushner

Serves 6.

Here's another recipe from this cookbook. I'm particularly interested in the miso-tahini mixture. Use it to top any mild fish, as a dip for vegetables, or drizzled over roasted vegetables.

The Glaze: mix everything together
2 tbs white miso
½ cup tahini
3 tbs pure maple sugar
1 tsp lemon peel, grated
Juice of 1 lemon
Garnish with cilantro if you like

The Fish
6 skinless fillets about 6 oz each
1 tsp neutral oil

Heat the oven to 425 degrees. Place the fish on a lined baking sheet with the oil on the bottom. Brush the glaze on top for about 10 minutes. The fish should feel firm to the touch and the center opaque when tested with a sharp knife. Sprinkle with the cilantro to serve.

Fidawish

Sephardi Cooking History by Helene Jawhara Piner

Serves 4–5

This is a Sephardi soup from Moroccan Jews of the 15th century. I first heard the author speak on a Zoom from the New York Food Festival. This was during the COVID lockdown. She is a culinary historian among many other talents. Since there are New World additions to the recipe, it has been slightly updated since the 1400s.

½ cup olive oil
5 garlic cloves, chopped
3 tomatoes, chopped
1 onion, sliced
3 green peppers, sliced
3 tsp salt
3 cups short vermicelli noodles
2 saffron strands for color
½ cup tuna, fresh or canned.
1 handful mint, chopped
6 cups water or vegetarian broth

In a pan or pot that can hold everything, start by placing the olive oil, garlic, chopped tomatoes, onions, peppers, and salt into the pot and fry them for 5 minutes. Add the vermicelli noodles (fideos in Spanish) and the saffron, mix well, and cook slowly for 2 minutes. Boil the water and then pour it into the pot. Add the chopped mint and tuna and mix. Cook slowly for about 15 minutes. Serve hot.

Keftes de Prassa y Carne

Cooking the Sephardic Way by Sephardic Sisterhood of Temple Tifereth Israel in Los Angeles.

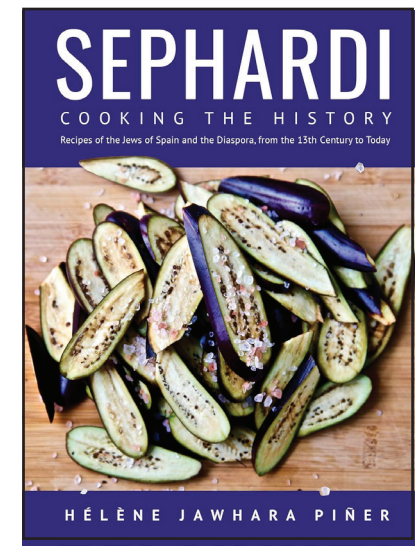
Makes about 16 small patties to serve 8.

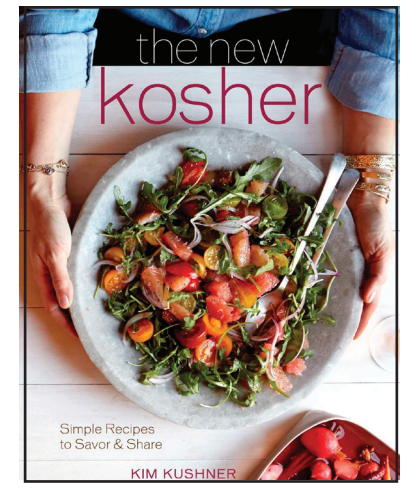
Sometimes I learn about recipes from people I didn't even know. I was sitting in the York coffee shop having hot chocolate when a group of women gathered at the table behind me. One noticed all the cookbooks I had on my table and stopped to ask about them. She is from a Sephardi family and makes many of the recipes her mother used to make as well as the cookbook they came from. I'll share a few more in the February column, but here is one that came originally from Istanbul, Turkey.

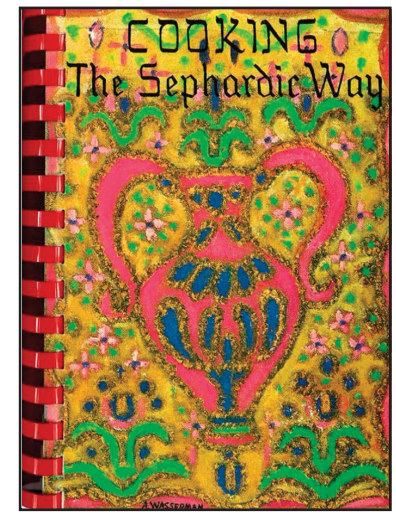
8 medium size stalks of leeks
½ pound of ground beef
2 eggs
1 tsp salt and ½ tsp pepper
1 tbs matzo meal
½ cup oil for frying
3 tbs flour, for frying

Sauce
2 tsp oil
1 8-oz can tomato sauce
½ cup leek liquid
salt and pepper to taste

Wash the leeks and cook in water until tender; drain well and save the liquid for the sauce. Chop the leeks and combine with the meat, 1 egg, salt and pepper, and matzo meal. Shape into patties. Dip the patties in flour and then in the other beaten egg and fry over medium heat until brown. Set the patties aside. Place the tomato sauce, half of reserved liquid from the stewed leeks, salt and pepper to taste in the pan. Place the patties in the sauce and simmer together for 10 minutes.


SEPHARDI
COOKING THE HISTORY
Recipes of the Jews of Spain and the Diaspora, from the 13th Century to Today
HÉLÈNE JAWHARA PIÑER





Warm up at Dalat

By Candace Bulkley and Trina Fuller

Candace and Trina became friends in the Temple Beth Emeth adult b-mitzvah class that graduated in 2022. They will be honing their palates, visiting, and writing about a variety of independent, locally owned Washtenaw County restaurants, catering to a variety of dietary preferences.

Winter weather arrived in Ann Arbor a bit late this year, and when it hit, we were ready for a big bowl of hot soup to warm us up. That desire led us to visit Dalat, a Vietnamese restaurant that started in Ypsilanti 35 years ago and relocated to Woodland Plaza in Ann Arbor in 2018. The austere dining room — which shares space in a strip mall with a grocery store — doesn't seem like much, but it is made up for by the excellent food that comes out of the kitchen.

The extensive menu offers lots of variety and something for most every diet. Give yourself plenty of time to read through the descriptions, not only to select your meal but to appreciate the components that make each dish unique: it's a feast for the eyes and the imagination. If your Vietnamese is a bit rusty, menu items are numbered for ease of ordering.

When it comes to spicy food, our tasters are on opposite ends of the spectrum. On this visit, we hovered in the mild zone with our selections, but rest assured chili lovers, Dalat has you covered. We started out with cha gio (deep-fried spring rolls) which arrived piping hot. These crispy rolls were generously filled with tender chicken, thin transparent noodles, black mushrooms, and shredded cabbage and carrots, and were fresh tasting and absolutely delicious with their accompanying sweet and sour dipping sauce. The frigid temperatures outside pushed us both toward pho, pronounced "fuh", the most renowned Vietnamese dish. Making pho is a labor-intensive multi-hour process involving a lot of meat, bones, skimming, and straining. The end result is a lovely clear broth which is fragrant and light yet full flavored, seasoned with star anise, cinnamon, cloves, coriander seeds, and ginger. Tender meat and rice noodles are added just before serving, Bean sprouts, chilis, cilantro and Thai basil are served on the side for you to add to your liking. Bottles of hoisin sauce and spicy rooster sauce were set at the table to further boost the flavor if you like. We chose one bowl of phở tái nạm (beef) and one of phở gà (chicken). The generous servings were thoroughly enjoyed and there was enough left to bring home for lunch the next day. For those readers who appreciate interesting textures which are popular in Asian cuisine you will find phở đặc biệt (beef pho), with the addition of meatballs, tripe, and beef tendon, on the menu as well.

Wanting to try another entrée, we were tempted by many options on the menu, but ultimately chose the cơm rang thố gà xé phay trộn lá quế, which translates to Vietnamese styled basil fried rice in a clay pot with shredded chicken & sunny-side up egg. As advertised, the dish arrived in a sizzling clay pot, and had a fried sunny side up egg on top with perfectly crispy edges. Unfortunately, the yolk was hard cooked, and didn't give us the saucy effect a runny yolk offers.

Our opinions differed on this dish. One thought it was disappointing with the overcooked egg and lacked flavor. The other, while also disappointed by the overcooked egg, thought it was a tasty combination and enjoyed the notes of anise provided by Thai basil, tender shredded chicken, and especially the crispy golden crust of rice that was created by the super-hot claypot — similar to Iran's tahdig. The takeaway lesson from this entree is that not all Vietnamese food is spicy, and it can have an understated and elegant palate which the heat-averse can enjoy. You be the judge!

Pressed for time when we sat down, we spotted the banana tapioca pudding on the menu — the only dessert offered — and ordered it along with our meal. There was no turning back despite our full and happy bellies. The tapioca arrived luxuriously bathed in warm coconut milk surrounded by freshly sliced bananas and topped with chopped peanuts, and was more than enough for two people to share! It was warm, comforting, and just sweet enough to satisfy, and was a great way to finish a meal that was motivated by wanting to warm up, before we headed back out into the cold, blustery Michigan weather.

While there are many reasons we want to return to Dalat, while checking out the luncheon menu, we spotted bento boxes and combination plates that appear to be a great way to try different dishes at an affordable price point. The wonderful pho broth is also available to take out, 30 ounces at $4 for chicken and $5 for the beef at the time of this writing.

We appreciated the table service and relaxed pace of our meal. The service was friendly and efficient, although our server was not very knowledgeable about the dishes. Dalat is open Monday–Saturday from 11 a.m.–7:30 p.m.

Dalat 2216 S. Main St., Ann Arbor

https://www.dalatrestaurantannarbor.com/

734.487.7600. ■

Ann Arbor rabbis join colleagues at Chabad conference in Brooklyn

By Jacob Scheer, Chabad media relations associate

From November 29 to December 1, over 6,500 rabbis and Jewish leaders from over 100 countries and all 50 U.S. states gathered in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, New York, for the International Conference of Chabad-Lubavitch Emissaries. Rabbi Zalman Zweibel and Rabbi Alter Goldstein of the Chabad of Ann Arbor joined the conference, and attended lectures, workshops, and networking events focused on strengthening Jewish awareness and practice around the world.

"Connecting with Jewish leaders from all over the world is extremely encouraging," said Rabbi Zweibel. "Hearing about the incredible things my colleagues are doing inspires me to do more to increase our engagement and programming for local Jews."

This annual event is the largest gathering of rabbis in the world, and consists of four days of workshops, a visit to the grave of the Rebbe, a spiritually uplifting Shabbat, and a grand gala banquet which highlights the work of Chabad rabbis around the world.

The conference has a celebratory feel, welcoming rabbinic leaders from Alaska to Zambia; however this year's conference took place just days after Abu Dhabi-based Chabad Rabbi Zvi Kogan was buried in Israel, after being murdered by terrorists in Dubai at the age of 28.

"It feels like we just lost a brother," said Rabbi Zweibel. "The way we respond to such a tragedy is to connect with each other, not just to mourn, but to recommit ourselves to our mission."

In addition to attending the lectures and workshops, the rabbis participated in an annual conference tradition. They posed for the annual "Chabad class picture" in which thousands of rabbis are photographed under the iconic gables of Chabad central headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway. Rabbis from all over the world joined together and posed in a portrait of Jewish pride and unity.

Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries, known as shluchim, are husband-and-wife teams who dedicate their lives to strengthening Jewish life in communities worldwide, often in remote locations without established Jewish infrastructure. They aim to reach both affiliated and unaffiliated Jews, welcoming Jews from all walks of life. From the city streets of Los Angeles to the islands of Thailand, Chabad serves not only as a spiritual home, but a focal point of Jewish life.

One of the conference highlights was the visit to the resting place of the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory, in Queens, New York. Known as "the Ohel," the Rebbe's resting place is one of the most-visited Jewish sites outside of Israel. Approximately one million people from all walks of life make pilgrimage there each year to ask for blessings, pray for spiritual guidance, and seek inspiration. Many of the Chabad emissaries came with handwritten letters from Jews in their communities and read them by the holy site.

This year, Rabbi Zweibel met up with Ann Arbor native Josh Bender at the Ohel. A graduate of Michigan State University, Josh now serves as the assistant rabbi at Temple Israel Center, a conservative synagogue in White Plains, New York. Rabbi Bender is an alum of Chabad of Ann Arbor's Camp Gan Israel, and attributes his experience at that camp as one of the factors which influenced him to ultimately become a rabbi. Rabbi Bender described his profound visit to Ohel as meaningful and impactful. "It was meaningful to visit the grave of such an important modern rabbinic sage whose teaching inspires me," he said.

All in all, this conference was a chance for Jewish leaders to come together and recommit to their mission of helping Jews in whatever way they need around the world.■

Beth Israel events for January

Everyone is welcome to join Beth Israel for services, classes. and events. Services are being held in person and virtually, unless otherwise noted on the calendar. Below is a list of the links to participate virtually in services at Beth Israel. Beth Israel is live streaming services on the Beth Israel YouTube channel (Beth Israel Congregation AA MI). All links are also available on the Beth Israel homepage (www.bethisrael-aa.org). Please note that passwords are used. Contact the office to get the passwords at office@bethisrael-aa.org.

Depolarizing Ourselves
Introductory Workshop
A first step toward civil engagement
Presented by Braver Angels of Washtenaw County
Braver Angels has created the Depolarizing Ourselves Workshop to help us reframe how we view the "other side" in the face of disagreements around politics. Successfully taming our inner polarizer starts with recognizing our tendency to make harmful assumptions about the motivations and intent of people with whom we disagree. The workshop addresses how we may inadvertently be complicit in, or possibly even encourage, polarization.
Sunday, January 26, 2025
2 to 4 pm
Beth Israel Congregation
G&S 2010 Building

Braver Angels: Depolarizing Ourselves Workshop
Sunday, January 26, at 2 p.m.
In our current political climate, much of our conflict doesn't come from healthy disagreement over policies, issues, or philosophy. Instead, it is created by the often highly polarizing content we see and hear in the media and in the uncomfortable conversations we have with others. Civil discourse begins in recognizing the humanity in our conversation partners. Mutual respect, not agreement, is necessary for healthy and productive discussion of contentious issues. Braver Angels has created the Depolarizing Ourselves Workshop to help us reframe how we view the "other side" in the face of disagreements around politics. The workshop addresses how we may inadvertently be complicit in, or possibly even encourage, polarization. Workshop led by Bonita Singal and Emily Twanmo with help from Ellen Abramson. Please join Beth Israel Congregation to learn about becoming less polarized so that we can connect across the aisle and within our community. Registration required, open to the community. Held in the G & S 2010 Building.

Youth Services (Tot Shabbat & Mini Minyan)
Saturday, January 11 & 25, at 11 a.m.
Preschoolers begin to learn and love Judaism through storytelling, singing, and hands-on activities. Families join for songs, stories, and more in an interactive service for tots. Tot Shabbats are led by either Katie Shelef or John McLaughlin. Mini Minyan is a slower learner's service for elementary school age children. The service will include Shabbat prayers and a "D'var and Discussion" in place of the Torah service. Mini Minyan is led by the Youth and Family Director Ben Brent.

Aura of Kabbalat Shabbat
Friday, January 24, at 6 p.m.
A Jewish Renewal-inspired singing service led by Rabbi Aura Ahuvia. The choir, dubbed the "Holy Levites," will be holding a rehearsal at 5:30 p.m. leading right up to and seamlessly into services. All are welcome to attend.

Youth Events in January

Chaverim (Third–Fifth Grade)
Sunday, January 19, at 10 a.m.
Gesher (Sixth–Eighth Grade)
Wednesday, January 15, at 6 p.m.
Saturday, January 25, after services
USY (Ninth–12th Grade)
Friday, January 17, at 6 p.m.

For Young Families

Young Family Yoga
Sunday, January 26, at noon
Theology Book Club: Online
Wednesdays at 7 p.m.
Beth Israel Congregation's Theology Book Club welcomes you to join them to read together and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. The books are in English. Contact Paul Shifrin at (248) 514-7276 for more information.

In Person and Online Services

Minyan
Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in the M&M Chapel and online
Sundays at 7:30 p.m. online only
Mondays at 7:30 p.m. online only
Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. online only
Wednesdays at 6:15 p.m. in the M&M Chapel and online
Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

Friday Evening Services: in person and virtual
Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services: in person and virtual
Saturdays at 9:30 a.m..■

Learning to think about Israel with Alex Sinclair

By Amichay Findling, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

Alex Sinclair is an author and an Israel educator, holding positions as Chief Content Officer at "Educating for Impact" and an adjunct lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has written and spoken widely on Jewish education, Israel-Diaspora relations, and Israeli politics, in both academic and popular contexts. He has worked or consulted for many of the finest Jewish educational and communal

Alex Sinclair

institutions in North America, Europe, and Israel.

The Jewish community in greater Ann Arbor was fortunate to host Sinclair for a long and content-packed weekend during his early November lecture tour across North America. During his four days' stay in southeast Michigan, he held several speaking engagements across Ann Arbor, sponsored by a collaboration of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, Temple Beth Emeth, Beth Israel Congregation, and Michigan Hillel.

Sinclair started his local tour at Temple Beth Emeth, where he spoke during and following the Friday night Shabbat service. The topic of discussion was "Engaging with Israel in the age of Smotrich and Ben Gvir." Sinclair tackled the difficult issue of maintaining loving relationships with a country that develops an ever-increasing ideological rift between itself and many in the diaspora. How can Americans continue supporting a state that is governed by radical supremacists and clerical ministers, while promoting liberal values at home?

Sinclair's proposal to this rift is adopting a view of dissidence, rather than separating ourselves from the only Jewish nation in the world. As dissidents, we are patriots, we love Israel but strongly oppose its current policies. We support Israelis while criticizing their government. Following his lecture, a spirited Q&A session took place, which lasted much longer than expected. Sinclair also offered his books for sale to follow up on the conversation, and they sold out!

The next day, Sinclair visited Beth Israel Congregation (BIC) and engaged congregants there. Jerry Sorokin, Executive Director of BIC, shared his reflections on the event:

"Alex Sinclair delivered the *D'var Torah* at Beth Israel's Shabbat morning service and then spoke again in the afternoon. In the *D'var Torah*, he related the well-known story of the binding of Isaac to contemporary controversies in Israel. In the afternoon talk, he challenged people to understand the impact of their formative experiences with Israel on how they interpret the current situation. Putting that context into the conversation helps to explain the generational divide in views about Israel. He raised questions about how to be supportive of Israel while actively criticizing ongoing government policies and military actions. His provocative comments generated questions and vigorous debate."

On Alex Sinclair's final day in Ann Arbor, a group of local Jewish professionals had lunch with him at Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County. Osnat Gafni-Papas, the Jewish Federation's Life & Legacy Manager, attended the luncheon and reported:

"Due to the intimate nature of the gathering, we were able to delve into a deep discussion about the differences between the younger and the older generations' relationships with Israel. To be able to hear others describe their perspectives on their first exposure to the state of Israel and how it shaped their vision of Israel was eye-opening. Though this conversation leant itself to vulnerability on our part, Alex found a way to weave our stories into the lessons he has learned through his research and teachings that felt validating. I found our time with him was very engaging and gave me a deeper understanding of the complexities that the role of Israel plays in our individual Jewish journeys."

Sinclair's visit concluded at Michigan Hillel, where he dined and conversed with a select group of student leaders. In this discussion, he returned to the topic of his first presentation — how to engage with Israel while it is governed by extremists, but at this unique campus engagement, emphasis was put on the situation of Jewish students and organizations facing intensified anti-Israeli and antisemitic propaganda on a daily basis.

Sarah Shapin, a native of Grand Rapids, is in the UM class of 2027. She attended this engagement and shared the following reflections:

"It was enlightening to learn more about Israel's political landscape from a more moderate perspective and gain insight on inner Israeli conflicts with current leaders. Coming out of the event, I found myself more curious about Israeli internal politics, now having a deeper understanding that the potential resolutions to conflicts between Israel and its neighboring countries aren't so straightforward, and that the means of reaching those goals aren't so clear from a multitude of angles. Getting to exchange ideas with and learn from Alex Sinclair and my peers through exchange of perspectives and proposals was an excellent opportunity, and I look forward to discussions such as this in the future."

During this four-events-in-four-days visit in Ann Arbor, more than 100 community members participated in in-depth, nuanced discussions about present-day Israel and the challenges that Israel-loving American Jews are facing.

For those who missed the engagements, or anyone who participated and wants more, Sinclair's books are available for purchase online, including his informative book, *Loving the Real Israel: An Educational Agenda for Liberal Zionism, and his latest novel, Perfect Enemy.* The latter is an exciting and suspenseful thriller that poses uncomfortable questions about trauma and revenge, the desire for peace, religious extremism, and the schisms of the Middle East.

Continue the conversation on January 12 and beyond

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor is proud to provide the Ann Arbor area community with a variety of opportunities for deep and nuanced learning about Israel. Recently, the Federation hosted an Israel educator in town to engage the community. Coming up on January 12 is another exciting opportunity. Please see additional details about a brunch engagement focusing on Jewish-Arab relations in Israel, and a kickoff event for the upcoming Community Israel trip, planned for the winter break of 2025–26.

There are more opportunities to engage in in-depth learning about Israel coming up, with two events on Sunday, January 12.

First, at 10 a.m., the Federation invites the community to its new Israel education series, which explores Jewish-Arab relations in Israeli society since October 7. The first event of the series will be an in-person/virtual hybrid brunch and lecture with Dr. Arik Cheshin about Jews and Arabs at the University of Haifa. Dr. Cheshin is a visiting Professor in the University of Michigan Department of Psychology. His home institution is the University of Haifa, and his research focuses on emotions in organizations. Among Israeli higher education institutions, the University of Haifa in northern Israel has the highest percentage (41%) of Arab Israeli students, making it fertile ground for a shared civil society.

Later that same day (5:30 p.m. on January 12 at Temple Beth Emeth), all are invited to learn about greater Ann Arbor's Community Trip to Israel in December 2025. Come learn more about the itinerary and hear what excites our community's leaders about the trip.

For more information, visit JewishAnnArbor.org/Events or contact Federation's Israel and Overseas Program Manager Amichay Findling at amichay@jewishannarbor.org..■

A Prayer for the State of Israel

Beth Dwoskin

Master of the Universe,

Bless the state of Israel, our people's homeland,
This nation of patchwork and jumble.
Color the ancient earth in the shades
of men and women.
Cause holy melodies to vibrate amidst these
broken walls,
And let us sing in all our native voices.

Release from slavery those who dwell within—
The righteous and the wicked,
The pure and the sinful,
The dark and the fair,
The Arab and the Jew.

Make our harmonies resound
From the banks of the Lyre to the Middle-Earth Sea,
And may all who dwell in this land
Bathe in the waters of peace.

Harvest of our life

By Donald Levitt

People are living longer than ever, with many living into their 80s, 90s, and beyond. This longevity can offer many wonderful opportunities — and many new challenges.

Temple Beth Emeth's Sacred Aging Institute (SAI) is a new initiative designed to bring a Jewish perspective to helping older adults navigate these challenges and enjoy the opportunities of their senior years.

SAI was preceded earlier this year with discussion groups based on the book *Getting Good at Getting Older*. These discussion groups were led by Rabbi Josh Whinston and Cantor Emerita Annie Rose.

Building on momentum arising from the discussion groups, SAI was launched this

Cantor Annie Rose leading the singing of prayers during lunch

fall, led by Cantor Rose and Rabbi Chelsea Feuchs. SAI offerings have included a six-week course on Mussar; sessions on "Writing Your Legacy Letter: Life Lessons and Stories to Share"; and a poetry reading and writing workshop entitled "Tell Your Story: Poetry and Solace." In addition, Cantor Rose and Rabbi Feuchs each led discussion groups based on Rabbi Richard Address's *Sacred Aging* podcast. Rabbi Address is the founder and director of jewishsacredaging.com and the *Seekers of Meaning* podcasts and webinars.

Shabbaton: The Harvest of Our Life.

On November 15–16, 2024, SAI hosted Rabbi Address for a Shabbaton on "The Harvest of Our Life."

Rabbi Address gave a d'var Torah on Friday evening entitled "Back to our Future: A look at key Jewish values that can shape a sacred foundation for life's third and fourth stages." His d'var Torah started with the questions: "How do we make sense of the time we have left?" and "How can Judaism provide a theological foundation and context for this question?"

Rabbi Address went on to describe four Jewish values which can provide a theological foundation for our lives:

B'riut — Health: It is a sacred commandment to take care of our body, mind, and soul.

R'fuah — Healing: We can be healed spiritually even if we cannot recover our physical health.

Sh'leimut – Wholeness: Maimonides, Buber, and Heschel described our life's work as a journey in search of an integrated self — a journey which continues throughout life.

K'dushah – Holiness: The mitzvah system connects us to the sacred in our everyday lives and helps us to make sacred choices — to choose life so others can benefit from our life.

On Saturday morning Rabbi Address spoke about "Talmud Torah: Parasha Vayera — From caregiving to dealing with adult children … From family rivalry to faith."

Bikur cholim is the commandment to visit and help those who are sick. As we are living longer lives, there can be a longer period during which older people require caregiving, and the adult children of these seniors may now be caregivers for their parents, their children, and their grandchildren. These adult children may also still be working — or wondering why the "golden years" of their retirement seem so demanding. Longer lives can also create financial challenges, e.g., the need for long-term care, which can disrupt family dynamics and require difficult family discussions.

The fifth commandment says to "Honor your father and your mother." Following this commandment during a prolonged period of caregiving for an elderly parent can create moments of great challenge, and also opportunities for the healing of relationships.

Due to longer lifespans, many congregations have an increasing proportion of congregants who are seniors. Some of these congregations are developing programs to support the senior congregants and their families. Examples of these programs include: a Shomrim service at the synagogue to honor caregivers; support groups and respite programs; health and wellness programming; and other educational forums.

Reflecting on caregiving, one of the Shabbaton participants, Annette Fisch, observed, "Now I need to think about my children as caregivers. To reduce emotional pressure on them, I have instructed my wonderful daughter-in-law to put me in a care facility when I reach that stage and to tell my children that it is my decision."

Another participant, Bonnie Fauman, thought back to the time when her husband was declining, but no one else was aware of this. She said that Rabbi Josh Whinston noticed her husband's absence, and asked "Do you have help?" This question nudged Bonnie to get help, and gave her permission to do so. She felt that Rabbi Whinston's comments were saying, I see you, and I understand your situation.

Religious rituals like lighting candles, attending a Passover seder, or reciting Kaddish connect us to Judaism, our history, and our faith. Now that people are living longer, there are new situations — which did not exist during the Talmudic period or even 30 years ago – and new opportunities for rituals which can be informed by Jewish culture and faith.

One example of a new ritual could be saying a blessing at the signing of one's advance medical directive. This situation can be a sacred moment, reminding us of our mortality, and providing us with an opportunity to express gratitude for reaching this transition point in our lives, and gratitude for being able to make decisions about our future.

Another ritual could arise in the context of removing one's wedding ring after a year of mourning for one's spouse. This could even be a prayer or ritual in front of the congregation, allowing the congregation to provide support for the mourning and transition process.

Other situations which lend themselves to rituals include: transitioning genders, receiving a diagnosis of dementia, signing an organ donation card, and cohabitation of older adults.

The Sacred Aging Institute going forward

SAI will feature a variety of classes,

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"What you do matters," law enforcement dialogue on core values

By Jewish Federation staff

On November 13 and 14, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor hosted "What You Do Matters," a training for Washtenaw County law enforcement and community members. A national program, it describes itself as "a powerful curriculum designed for today's law enforcement professionals. Using historical images and stories from the Holocaust, trained facilitators engage participants in a dialogue about the role of law enforcement in today's communities and the importance of core values in ensuring the integrity and vibrancy of democracy."

The program was developed after a visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., in 2006, by law enforcement leaders of Yavapai County, Arizona. Those leaders recognized that the Holocaust is much more than a chapter from a history book — it provides important insight into the consequences when a government shifts the mission of the police from protecting individuals to supporting the abuse of basic human rights. "What You Do Matters" examines policing within the legal and political framework of Nazi Germany — a journey that eventually turned those who should protect life and liberty into those who intimidated, humiliated, deported, and eventually murdered millions of innocent people.

The Ann Arbor area's Jewish Community Security Manager Shane Dennis attended a "What You Do Matters" training at the Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo shortly after Hamas' terrorist attack on Israel in October 2023.

"I felt this training was very compelling and relevant," said Dennis. "I wanted to bring it to law enforcement in Washtenaw County." Thanks to the Federation's LiveSecure Campaign, which raises funds specifically for local security needs, Dennis was able to do so.

Members of the Ann Arbor Police Department and University of Michigan Division of Public Safety and Security attended November's training. Based on feedback from officers that attended, it was very well received.

Interested members of the local Jewish community also participated. One of those people was Nancy Margolis, former Federation and JCC Executive Director, and current Director of Embracing Our Differences Michigan, a public art project in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. Margolis said the training was "fabulous and truly eye-opening."

She said she learned how "the Nazis used deceiving photographs to wrongly imply support for their party — what we now call Fake News. The methods that the Nazis used to involve local police officers is a good lesson for all."

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor would like to thank Beth Israel Congregation for hosting the training at its building. Based on the success of this training, Security Manager Dennis hopes to bring it back in the future so more officers can benefit from it.

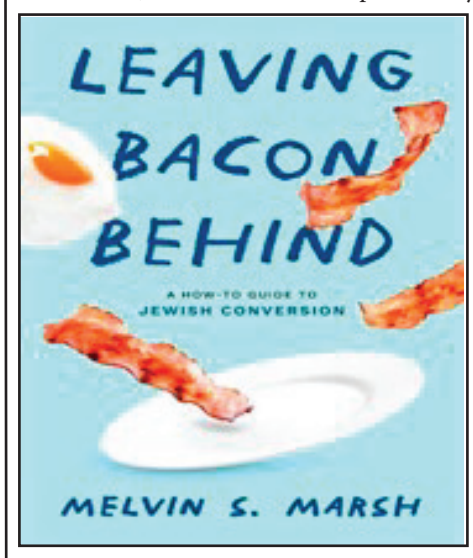
"Everyone wishing to defend democracy

continued to page 19

Judaism chooses Mr. Marsh

Leaving Bacon Behind: A How-to Guide to Jewish Conversion
Reviewed by Cecilia Ables

When looking for a pleasant read, *Leaving Bacon Behind*, written by Melvin S. Marsh, is a first-rate choice. The text is beautifully written in understandable, simple terms. Although I am not Jewish, I have a couple of very



close friends that are, and I have spent a lot of time not understanding Judaism. I did not understand the reasons for my Jewish friends' choices. And, sadly, I may have been perceived as judgmental of their choices. I did not understand why we celebrated different holidays, for instance, why Jews celebrate the Sabbath on Saturday, not Sunday.

When I posed my questions to my friends, they would answer in a way I still did not understand. Thankfully after reading *Leaving Bacon Behind,* I found answers to many of my questions, in explanations that finally made sense.

I first met Mr. Marsh when he was the professor in my Research Methods class at Southern New Hampshure University. I was intrigued when he mentioned writing a book on converting to Judaism. When I opened Mr. Marsh's book, I did not know what to expect; however after reading the opening paragraph, I was hooked. As I delved into the pages, I finally started to comprehend what my friends had tried to share. *Leaving Bacon Behind* beautifully describes Mr. Marsh's experiences discovering Judaism.

The book begins with breaking down his exploration of Judaism, obtaining an education, finding a rabbi, developing a Jewish identity, the conversion ceremony, and what happens after conversion. Included is a sample conversion essay. Additionally, he discusses different aspects of the faith, including the Jewish holidays, a topic on which I had many questions.

In every chapter, readers are immersed in Mr. Marsh's life and journey. At times, I felt like I wasn't reading a book at all but sitting next to him listening to his story while walking through it with him.

This book will take you on an amazing, detailed, and humbling journey, side-by-side with the author. "I believe in many ways Judaism chose me," Mr. Marsh writes in *Leaving Bacon Behind*. I think I am beginning to understand.■

Feature

One Palestinian historian. A roomful of observant Jews. And a conversation all of us must have

By Jodi Rudoren. This story was originally published in the Forward on December 6, 2024. To get the Forward's free email newsletters delivered to your inbox, go to https://forward.com/newsletter-signup/. This is an adaptation of our editor-in-chief's weekly newsletter. Sign up to get it delivered to your inbox on Friday afternoons.

The guest speaker opened by ticking off a few biographical facts sure to resonate with the crowd of mostly Orthodox Jews from the Upper West Side. He was born in 1948, the year of Israel's founding. He has four grandchildren. His family has a strong tradition of religious learning. He's a lifelong fan of the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Soon, he'll be quoting from the diaries of David Ben Gurion.

"My family has a history in Jerusalem going back at least until the Crusades, maybe further," Rashid Khalidi, the world's preeminent Palestinian historian, said as some of the kippah-wearers and hostage-pin bearers twitched a little in their seats.

His great-great-great uncle was elected mayor of Jerusalem in 1935. His father worked for the United Nations and was in Security Council meetings regarding the Middle East so, Khalidi said, "I knew what was actually happening; I didn't hear the lies in *The New York Times*."

The laughter at this line betrayed both the beauty and the complexity of this unusual salon I attended just before Thanksgiving in a friend's 88th Street brownstone. The Jews in the audience — Shabbat-observant, day-school parents, a few Israeli expats and rabbinic scholars — are used to hearing the Gray Lady condemned as hopelessly anti-Israel; Khalidi sees it as entrenched in a pro-Israel worldview.

"We've grown up on a certain Zionist history that we're proud of — and that excludes other stories," the organizer, an Israeli American named Esther Sperber, had said by way of introduction. "What we're going to hear is going to be challenging," she added. "I hope it's not a debate but a conversation."

Khalidi, who recently retired from Columbia University after more than two decades, got an extra 15 minutes of fame this week after President Joe Biden was photographed buying a copy of his 2020 book, *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine*. In fact, he's been having something of an extended moment since the October 7 Hamas terror attack on Israel — which he condemned — and throughout the ensuing, endless war in Gaza.

The subject of an October profile in *The Guardian* and a lengthy *Haaretz* interview just published in English, Khalidi has given scores, if not hundreds, of talks over the last 14 months of devastating violence. Yet Sperber's salon was his first for a Jewish audience not just since October 7 but in 15 or 20 years.

"I used to be invited to synagogues, I used to speak at the Hillel at University of Chicago when it was run by Rabbi Danny Leifer," Khalidi recalled, a little wistfully. (He spent eight years at U. Chicago before moving to Columbia in 2003.)

"This is before Hillel became centralized and turned into a place where people who didn't accept certain views weren't welcome," he added. "I can't cross the threshold of a Hillel now."

I know that quote is going to make some readers shut down. You support Hillel, your kids go to Hillel, and you don't think it's closed-minded — or maybe you think it's not a space where Palestinian perspectives belong. I thought about cutting the "certain views" line, to keep you reading this newsletter, to prevent you from dismissing Khalidi.

But this story, like Sperber's makeshift group, is about breaking out of the bubbles too many of us live inside, particularly regarding Israel. It's about the urgent need for all of us to wrestle with other people's perspectives and narratives even about the things closest to our hearts, even when it's upsetting. So go ahead and think Khalidi is wrong about Hillel — and *The New York Times* and maybe the whole conflict — but also, please, swallow hard and stick with me to hear him out.

"Israel is on a course that is, in my view,

suicidal," Khalidi told the 60-some folks crowded into the living room that night. "There are two peoples there. The Palestinians are not going to be eliminated."

And: "Anybody who wants to talk about a two-state solution has to talk about dismantling the obstacles to it erected over the last 57 years." He mentioned that 10% of Israeli voters live in settlements in the occupied West Bank. And the United States, despite condemning such settlements as obstacles to peace, nonetheless allows tax-deductible donations to groups that support them.

"Every single act of colonization has produced resistance."

(I know: You may find the word "colonization" regarding Israel to be ahistorical and offensive, because Jews are also indigenous in the Holy Land, and because the pioneers who built the modern state were largely refugees from either the Holocaust or from Arab countries that expelled Jews after its founding. Let it go. Hear the rest.)

"You cannot have a system where one person's property is sacred and another's can be taken, based on nationality," Khalidi said of Israel's rules regarding land ownership.

"They are creating another generation that will fight them," he continued, referring to the death, destruction, and displacement in Gaza.

"It took years to stop the Vietnam War — years and years and years," he cautioned. "This will be much harder."

I first met Sperber, who is now 53, at the September 2023 rally she put together outside the United Nations to protest Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attempts to overhaul Israel's judiciary. When Hamas attacked two weeks later, Sperber — like the pro-democracy movement in Israel — immediately transformed her activism into support for October 7 victims, survivors, and hostage families.

She is an architect by trade, and an inveterate organizer who describes herself as "liberal-leaning Modern Orthodox." The eldest of 10 siblings, she grew up in Jerusalem and has lived in New York since grad school. Her nephew was recently fighting in Lebanon. Her daughter started Harvard this fall after a gap year in Israel.

The group that hosted Khalidi has no name, no board of directors, no mission statement. It grew out of a frustration among a handful of friends who, as she put it, "felt there was a certain conversation not happening in our communities." They've hosted eight events so far in various Upper West Side living rooms, including a legal seminar on settlements and a Shabbat Teshuvah d'var Torah on what the moral responsibilities are for a Jewish state. The far-left *Haaretz* reporter Amira Hass, who used to live in Gaza — "that was a hard talk to listen to," Sperber recalled — and the head of Israel's version of the ACLU.

"Since the beginning of the war, it's been very hard to square the discourse among the Jewish community — if you say anything about the occupation of Palestinians, you're on one side, and if you care about Israelis and the Jewish state and the hostages and my nephew who's in the IDF, then you're on the other side," Sperber told me to explain the motivation behind the speaker series.

"We love Israel, and I think the occupation is terrible and this war is terrible and there's a certain set of values that we've stopped discussing in our schools and synagogues, both here and in Israel," she continued. "There's another version of what it means to be a God-believing Jew that is not really represented. Our institutions and our community have been a little too deferential, or too timid, about standing up for our values."

Khalidi was the first Palestinian — the first non-Jew — on the docket. Sperber told me that before she hit "send" on the email invitation, she had a hold-your-breath moment, wondering, "are people going to say, 'You've gone too far'?"

Two people who'd come to prior talks said they'd skip this one because they didn't want to support Khalidi. But the event drew the largest audience yet, and while there was some tension in the air when he uttered the words "apartheid" and "genocide" — and, especially, when he was fairly dismissive of concerns that pro-Palestinian protests on campus were making Jewish students unsafe — Sperber said she heard few complaints.

"We thought it was really important to hear directly from him," she told me. "It's one thing to have someone come with an ideology and say 'settler-colonialism' and 'apartheid' — and something else when someone has read all the primary sources on early Zionism and can back up his claims."

Especially, perhaps, if that someone also lives on the Upper West Side and has a son who gave him a Brooklyn Dodgers hat for his birthday.

After the talk concluded, I watched a man in the audience whip out his own Dodgers cap to show Khalidi. Which is not going to stop the fighting in Gaza or end a hundred-year war. But it did create a little more conversation.

Jodi Rudoren has been editor-in-chief of the Forward since 2019. She previously spent 21 years at The New York Times, including a stint as Jerusalem bureau chief. Twitter: @rudoren. Email: rudoren@forward.com.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Forward. Discover more perspectives in Opinion. To contact Opinion authors, email opinion@forward.com..■

"What you do matters" continued from page 18

ought to take this course," said Nancy Margolis.

More information about this program can be found at wydminstitute.com.

In addition to "What You Do Matters," the Federation received a grant from the Tepper Foundation that will allow Shane Dennis to share his security expertise, such as staff trainings and facility threat assessments, with the Federation's interfaith partners. The outreach to these partners is being done in collaboration with the Federation's Community Relations Director Rabbi Asher Lopatin. The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor would like to thank the Tepper Foundation for the financial support to demonstrate the Federation's value to the broader Ann Arbor area community.

To learn more about local security efforts for the Jewish community or to support the LiveSecure Campaign and make programs like these possible in the future, contact Shane Dennis (shane@jewishannarbor.org) or visit JewishAnnArbor.org/our-community/community-security.■

Harvest of our life continued from page 18

presentations, and workshops, both clergy- and lay-led, throughout 2025. Topics include death and legacy, end-of-life decisions, healthy aging, and more.

All of these programs are open not just to members of Temple Beth Emeth, but to the entire Washtenaw Jewish Community. Check the Temple Beth Emeth website for additional information regarding registration. If you have any questions or need any help with registration, please contact Rabbi Chelsea Feuchs at rabbifeuchs@templebethemeth.org ■

Remembering Larry Smith

Compiled by Nancy Margolis

When Sharon and Chuck Newman returned from Israel in 1983 wanting to start a Jewish community center, Larry Smith seized the idea and made it happen. With his innovative organizational skills, Larry designed and led the first community-wide visioning session which mobilized the energy, passion, and resources to develop the JCC in Ann Arbor.

Larry served as JCC president for five years (many thought he ought to be elected for life). He built a strong founding board of directors and guided the members to achieve their dreams and goals. He had a unique ability to elevate his colleagues and friends.

Joanne and Larry Smith

He was a force for change wherever he went. His ideas and skills touched so many of our local Jewish organizations including the Jewish Federation, Temple Beth Emeth, and Jewish Family Services. Whenever Jewish organizations worried about competition, Larry would always say "A rising tide lifts all boats." We will forever be deeply grateful to Larry for helping to build our vibrant local Jewish community.

Larry was the vice-president of marketing and student affairs at Eastern Michigan University for 25 years. He was nationally recognized as a pioneer in marketing nonprofit organizations and for innovative approaches to executive development.

Here are thoughts from a few of his friends.

From Susan Fisher

Larry Smith left his mark in all the communities and organizations in which he lived and worked. He has left a void and on a more personal level I will miss my very good friend Larry Smith. John and I certainly missed Larry and Joanne when they moved to Seattle 13-plus years ago but at least we could visit and talk — this is different, and oh so very difficult.

Larry typically answered the phone when I called — how I will miss his bombastic *"fantastic!"* when I would ask how they were doing. That always started the conversation on a high note.

I am certainly aware of all that Larry did professionally and as a member of any community of which he was a part. I certainly benefited from his insights, support, and help as I moved from work responsibilities to the responsibilities of being a board member and board officer in various nonprofits. My son, David, also had many important and meaningful conversations with Larry. Hard to wrap my mind around the fact that those interactions are now at an end.

Besides the support and mentorship, however, Larry was my friend and a wonderful one. We shared holiday meals together regularly and Larry and Joanne included us as unofficial family members. Those who only saw Larry in his professional demeanor missed the sharp wit and comedic aspects of this exceptional man. Larry had a terrific sense of humor and I could go on and on detailing some of the funny "antics" this very accomplished and respected man could get up to. Think Julie's leotard on his head with arms framing his face as payos as he "performed" one of his "shticks" involving various headgear and a plethora of funny faces. You can only imagine. The memories keep flooding in — along with the tears.

John and I visited Larry and Joanne when they moved to Seattle, and later I visited alone. The visits were fun, joyful, and warm. I hated when it was time to leave. Larry was always the consummate host and I so enjoyed our conversations.

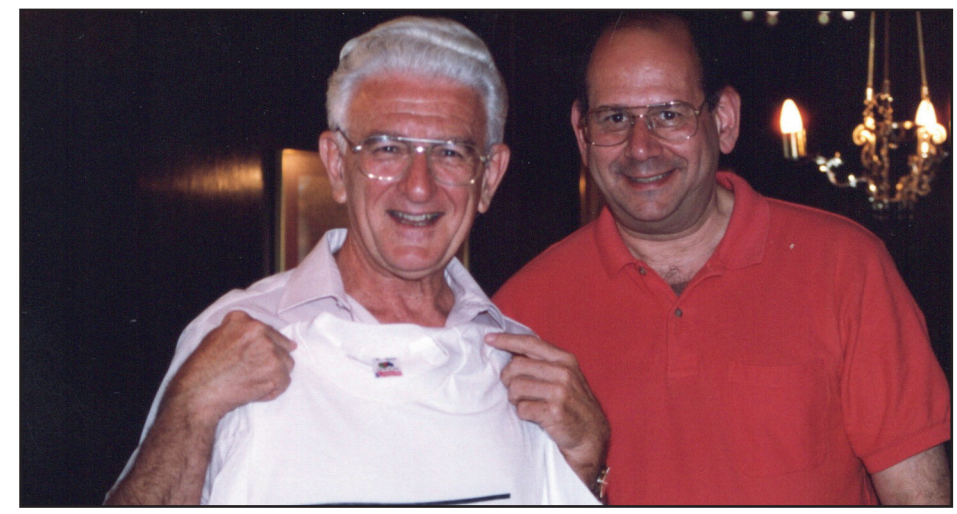
Larry was exceptional on so many levels — I was so lucky to have him as a good friend, and the communities in which he lived benefited from his insights, thoughtfulness, and planning skills. Larry was truly, and will always be, an unforgettable person — larger than life, a true presence in any space he inhabited. No question about it, "his memory will be for a blessing."

From David and Phyllis Herzig

David and Larry told so many of the same jokes that they could refer to them "by number," always receiving laughs from Joanne and Phyllis who had no doubt forgotten the punch line! The two couples travelled frequently together to Stratford and Niagara on the Lake, to Key West, Chicago, and to Australia and New Zealand. Larry liked to shop and encouraged others to purchase as well! He stimulated us to look at and understand better what we saw; this made the trips so much more enjoyable and enriched. Larry often related compassionate stories about EMU students he mentored or shepherded. His creativity and leadership skills enhanced the world of higher education, as well as the Jewish Community in Washtenaw County.

From Joshua Bloom:

I met Larry when I was 18 years old when my father, Alan Bloom, introduced us on the streets of Ann Arbor as he was walking by. Larry was 65 and was working on a book on the changing college experience and wanted to talk further with me about my experience as a freshman at the University of Michigan. An unlikely cross-generational friendship emerged, and I continued to speak with Larry for the next 20 years almost once every three months. Larry would always introduce me to his peers as his dear friend, and when they looked at us with questioning eyes, we simply chuckled. Larry had an ability to connect with people of all ages, and I was lucky enough to connect with him. He was a titan of the Jewish community in Ann Arbor and helped establish the Jewish world there as the first president of the JCC. Larry had the unique and powerful ability to elevate anyone's mind that he crossed. He pushed you to think a little deeper, believe in yourself a little more than you thought possible, and search a little harder for a greater understanding. I can still hear Larry's voice in my head and see his wonderful smile, and I will greatly miss our conversations.



Larry Smith with Arie Shoval, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Education and Culture in Israel. Taken on the Washtenaw County Community Tour of Israel in 1992.

From Chuck Newman:

The first time I met Larry was at the initial meeting of the committee to select a new rabbi for Temple Beth Emeth. As the chair of the committee, he informed us that no meeting would take more than one hour and our decisions would be made democratically. By the end of the meeting, I realized that he was right about the length of the meetings, but Larry wasn't going to waste time on the democratic approach when there was work to be done. At one point he announced that we had agreed on something that I hadn't agreed with and I said so. He seemed to respect that I wasn't the least bit intimidated by him, and that was the start of a treasured and productive friendship. It was clear that we shared the same philosophy: lead, follow, or get out of the way. With Larry's leadership, it didn't take many meetings to select and hire the best candidate, Bob Levy.

Larry had a deep professional and personal interest in bringing about change. He invited people with a similar interest and expertise to a monthly salon where we discussed how to bring about change. When I decided to form the Jewish Community Center, I knew that if we were to be successful, we needed Larry. His determination, ability, commitment to the Jewish community, and willingness to press on despite opposition from those who were threatened by the idea of having a JCC in Ann Arbor was invaluable. I'm not sure we would have a JCC without Larry. And indeed, no JCC board meeting took longer than an hour when Larry or I was its president.

Larry made the world a better place. May his memory be for a blessing. I miss him.

From Temple Beth Emeth

His family shared that as a teenager, he adopted the Latin motto, "Faber est suae quisque fortunae: Every person is the artisan of their own fortune." Larry lived by these words and believed that success in life is measured not by accolades or riches, but by the impact we make on individuals. In that spirit, he leaves an amazing legacy. Larry mentored countless people and had a transformative effect on many lives. He worked tirelessly to have a positive impact on any community that he was a part of, professionally and personally, and that includes the Jewish community of Ann Arbor.

Larry was instrumental in the futuring process that led to the development of the JCC, and the restructuring of existing communal organizations to form the Jewish Federation. He was one of the drivers of the creative concept behind Temple Beth Emeth and identified the need for a Jewish Family Services to address social service needs.

The accomplishment Larry was most proud of was the family he built with his beloved wife Joanne. Family to him went beyond blood and extended to many dear friends as well. He created a home filled with fierce love as well as radical candor.

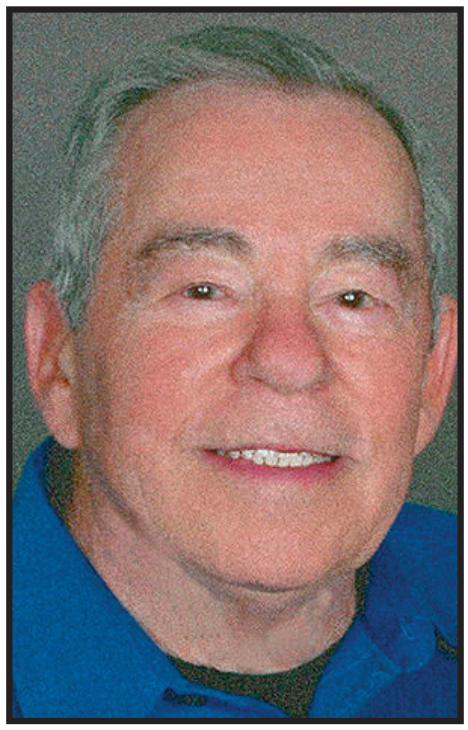
Our hearts go out to Larry's family and everyone whose lives he touched — as a mentor, colleague, and friend. Larry's leadership and unwavering dedication to our Jewish community have left a profound legacy. His generosity and guidance will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Larry was the husband of Joanne Smith; brother of Rochelle Citron; father of David Leibsohn (Sakina Zerrell), Emily Bradley (Dewayne Bradley), and Julie Smith (Marc Sasala); grandfather to Sophie Leibsohn, Flora Bradley, Owen Bradley, Morris Richman, and Hazel Smith; he was the beloved uncle to many nieces and nephews.

Larry believed strongly in philanthropy and the financial sustainability of Jewish organizations. Donations in his memory may be made to Temple Beth Am, 2632 NE 80 St. Seattle WA 98115 or Northwest Harvest, P.O. Box 12272 Seattle WA 98102. Or HIAS. ■

Obituaries

The WJN prints obituaries, memories, and eulogies free of charge for family members of Washtenaw Jewish community members as a service to the community and to honor the lives of those who have passed away. When local congregations send condolence notices to the WJN, the editor searches for obituaries online. Also, community members are invited to send obituaries to the editor.

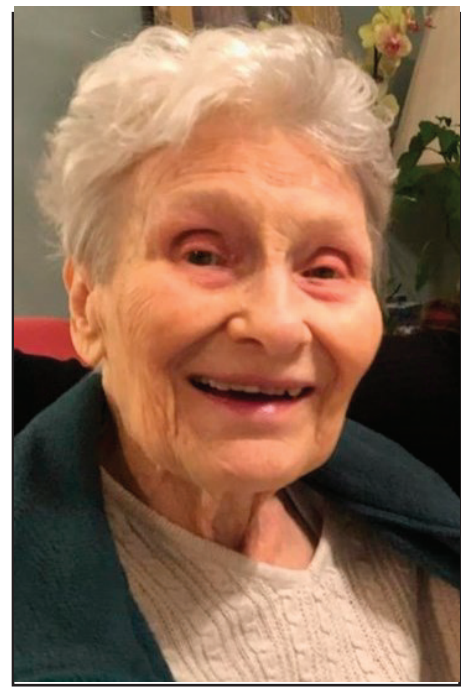


Mitchell Rycus, aged 92, was born in Detroit on June 20, 1932, and passed away on November 27, 2024, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Mitch lived a life marked by curiosity, joy, and a profound commitment to improving the world around him.

From 1986 till 1992 Dr. Rycus served as Chairman of the University of Michigan's Urban Planning Program and received emeritus status in June of 2000. He served as co-director of the Studies in Urban Security Group (SUSG), for over 20 years. SUSG provided consulting for the city of Detroit's Police, Fire/EMS, and Water Departments. Dr. Rycus has worked with the University of Michigan's Safety and Security Task Force on perceptions of campus safety. In 1997 he helped prepare three reports on international water security methods, and emergency response planning for the United States' President's Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection.

Rycus wrote many books of fiction. His first novel, *Rub up: Musings of a Navy Corpsman,* was an Ann Arbor best seller in October, 2007. In January, 2010 his second novel, *The Noble Profession of Leaf Chasing*, was released. His third novel, *The Soil is Dead,* a saga about some mysterious slugs that could destroy the world, was released in 2012. In May 2021, *A Death in Detroit*, a novella about a Jewish family in 1946 Detroit, caught up in a murder investigation, was published (and excerpted in the WJN). *The Rapacious Elegiac*, about the owner of a unique business in San Francisco, was released in June 2023.

Mitch leaves behind a loving family: his wife, Carole Rycus; children, Lisa (Saulius) Mikalonis and Peter (Meena Bajracharya) Rycus; grandchildren, Sam (Dr. Natasha Kizy) Mikalonis, Evan (fiancée Lauren Flynn) Mikalonis, Tyler (fiancée Emily Malmsten) Mikalonis, and Abe Rycus; and great-granddaughter, Mila Lou Mikalonis. He was a devoted brother to Mel (the late Barbara) Rycus and is also survived by numerous cherished family members and friends. Contributions in Mitch's memory may be made to Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, 2245 S State St, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, or to a charity of one's choice.



Muriel Zuckerman, age 97, died on November 29, 2024, at Balfour Ann Arbor. Muriel is predeceased by her loving husband, Oscar Zuckerman, and her parents Harry and Bessie Green. Muriel is survived by her sister-in-law, Evelyn Wachtel, several nieces and nephews, her children, Barbara Zuckerman of New York City, Roberta Tankanow (Larry) of Ann Arbor, Mark Zuckerman (Graziella) of St. James, NY, Brian Zuckerman (Vangie) of Salem, Oregon, grandchildren Alyse Tankanow, Andrew Tankanow (Jennifer), Mireille Oldak (John), Valerie (Gitis), Eric Zuckerman (Sereana), Ephraim Zuckerman, Jamie Zuckerman, Joanna Zuckerman, David Zuckerman, and great grandchildren Alexandra and Henry Cohen, Max and Lauren Tankanow, and Anna and Aaron Oldak.

Muriel, an only child, was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and at the age of 4 moved to Buffalo, New York, with her parents and lived there until age 19. One summer while staying with her older cousin Bea Lipkin (4 years older) the two teens decided to drive to Moonwinks Restaurant and bar in Cuba, NY. Muriel (really only 14) was introduced as a 17-yr old when she met Oscar, 7 years her senior and a college student! Thus, the romance began. Oscar graduated from St. Bonaventure University, enlisted in the U.S. Army, and was sent to war in 1942. Muriel and Oscar maintained their romance through letters while she was in high school and Oscar, a tank sergeant, was fighting in Europe. The letters were filled with passion, jokes, and promises to remain faithful until the war was over. They were married in 1946 and moved to Olean, New York, where Oscar owned a hardware store and automotive repair shop, and Muriel was a homemaker and raised four children. When the children were in junior high, Muriel went back to school to earn a master's in education and history at St. Bonaventure University. Her children delightfully attended her graduation! Muriel taught American History in Portville, New York, before retiring after many years of educating high school students. Muriel and Oscar retired to Wellington, Florida, to be near her cousin Bea. Soon after their move though, Ozzie passed away suddenly at age 67, and Muriel had to learn to pump gas, take care of her home, and manage her finances.

Muriel was passionate about education and the arts, including Asian Art, Impressionism, classical music, opera (*Madame Butterfly* was her favorite), big band and swing music, musicals by Sondheim and Oscar and Hammerstein, and ballet. She and Ozzie often attended plays and music at Stratford, Ontario, Bernard Shaw Festivals, and Chatauqua Institute. She impressed upon her children the importance of learning a musical instrument, the power of reading and education, and the importance of knowing about their Jewish background and perpetuating Judaism. Muriel and Ozzie were emphatic that their children should pursue college degrees and they made sure that they would not have any loans to obscure their educational quest.

Muriel and her family were active members of B'Nai Israel Congregation in Olean, New York, and encouraged the children to attend Jewish camps and join the Youth Group. Muriel was a member of the Temple's Sisterhood and a life member of Hadassah. Muriel and Ozzie were seldom apart. Even when she attended a Sisterhood convention in Albany, she felt guilty for leaving her beloved.

Muriel was a devoted and adoring wife, mother, grand- and great-grandmother, and the matriarch of the family. She was known as GiGi, mother bear, the Chief, mother, and mom. Muriel moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan, to live near her daughter, Roberta, and family, and remained here until her death. She loved living in Ann Arbor and often attended lectures, concerts, and football games at UM. She liked to cheer on the team and often was quite vocal!

Muriel had quite the sweet tooth. She loved gourmet jellybeans, Stella Doro cookies, homemade chocolate chip cookies, gingersnap cookies, and strudel. She always professed moderation and the necessity of eating only good-quality sweets. Muriel was an avid golfer, bridge player, and serious walker. She did not like it if you dawdled and could not keep up the pace. She was obsessed with wanting to stay healthy and didn't want to be a burden on anyone, least of all her children.

The family wishes to thank the staff in Memory Care at Balfour and the staff at Arbor Hospice for your compassionate care of Muriel.

Muriel will be buried in Florida at the IJ Morris Star of David cemetery next to her beloved, Oscar. The family will sit shiva in Florida and a memorial service will be held in Ann Arbor, May 2025. Donations in Muriel's memory can be made to Hadassah (https://www.hadaassah.org), Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (https://giving.mskcc.org) or Beth Israel Congregation Ann Arbor (https://www.bethisrael-aa.org). ■

Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to the families of:

Laurence Smith, husband of Joanne Simth, father of David Leibsohn (Sakina Zerrell), Emily Bradley (Dewayne Bradley), and Julie Smith (Marc Sasala); grandfather to Sophie, Flora, Owen, Morris, and Hazel. November 22, 2024.

Laurie Lichter, the daughter of Paul and Carolyn Lichter and mother of Max, Ilana, and Annie Rashes, and niece of Allen Lichter, November 16.

Mitchell Rycus, husband of Carole Rycus, November 27.

Muriel Zuckerman, mother of Roberta Tankanow and grandmother of Alyse Tankanow, November 29.

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazel tovs to:

Jeffrey and Lisa Bernstein on the marriage of their son, Zachary Bernstein-Rothberg to Zachary Carruthers-Rothberg.

Gary and Eileen Freed on the birth of their first grandchild, daughter of Rabbi Ben Freed and Ariane Barrie-Stern.

ANN ARBOR COMMUNITY TRIP TO ISRAEL

WHY ISRAEL? WHY NOW?

DECEMBER 21, 2025-JANUARY 1, 2026

Join the greater Ann Arbor community for an unforgettable trip to Israel.

Travel with local **community leaders**

Enjoy delicious food and **new friends**

Understand **your own relationship** with Israel

Experience Israel's **rebuilding** efforts first-hand

Explore the **nuance** of life in Israel

Learn more at an info session:
January 12, 5pm at Temple Beth Emeth
Register at JewishAnnArbor.org/Events

We love to help those who help.

Proud to support 300+ nonprofits.

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Preschool Expo

Sunday, January 26, 2025 | 1–4pm

DOWNTOWN LIBRARY • 343 S. FIFTH AVENUE • ANN ARBOR

Gather information on preschools, talk to preschool representatives, and find the best fit for your child!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT AADL.ORG/PRESCHOOLEXPO

ANN ARBOR DISTRICT LIBRARY

LSA JEAN & SAMUEL FRANKEL CENTER FOR JUDAIC STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

FRANKEL CENTER EVENTS

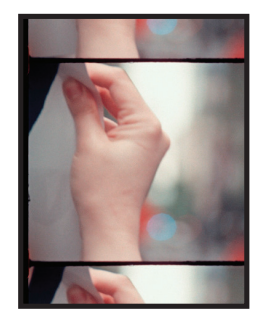
Visit **lsa.umich.edu/judaic** for more information

Bridging Legal Worlds: Jewish Women as Litigants before a German Imperial Supreme Court

Tamar Menashe (Emory University)

Thursday, January 30
1:00 - 2:30 PM
2022 South Thayer Building

This lecture examines how Jewish women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries navigated various legal systems to litigate before Germany's Imperial Chamber Court, using court cases to highlight their influence on Jewish legal standing.



Devotion & the Insatiable, An Artist Talk

Rudy Gerson, Artist

Tuesday, February 18
5:30 - 7:00 pm
2435 North Quadrangle

Gerson will share his multidisciplinary practice exploring erotics in memory culture and social life, screen recent films, read text works, and discuss themes of sacredness, profanity, queer poetics, and aesthetics of desire.

We are pleased to provide reasonable accommodations to enable full participation in this event. Please contact js-event-coord@umich.edu to request disability accommodations or with any questions/concerns.

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